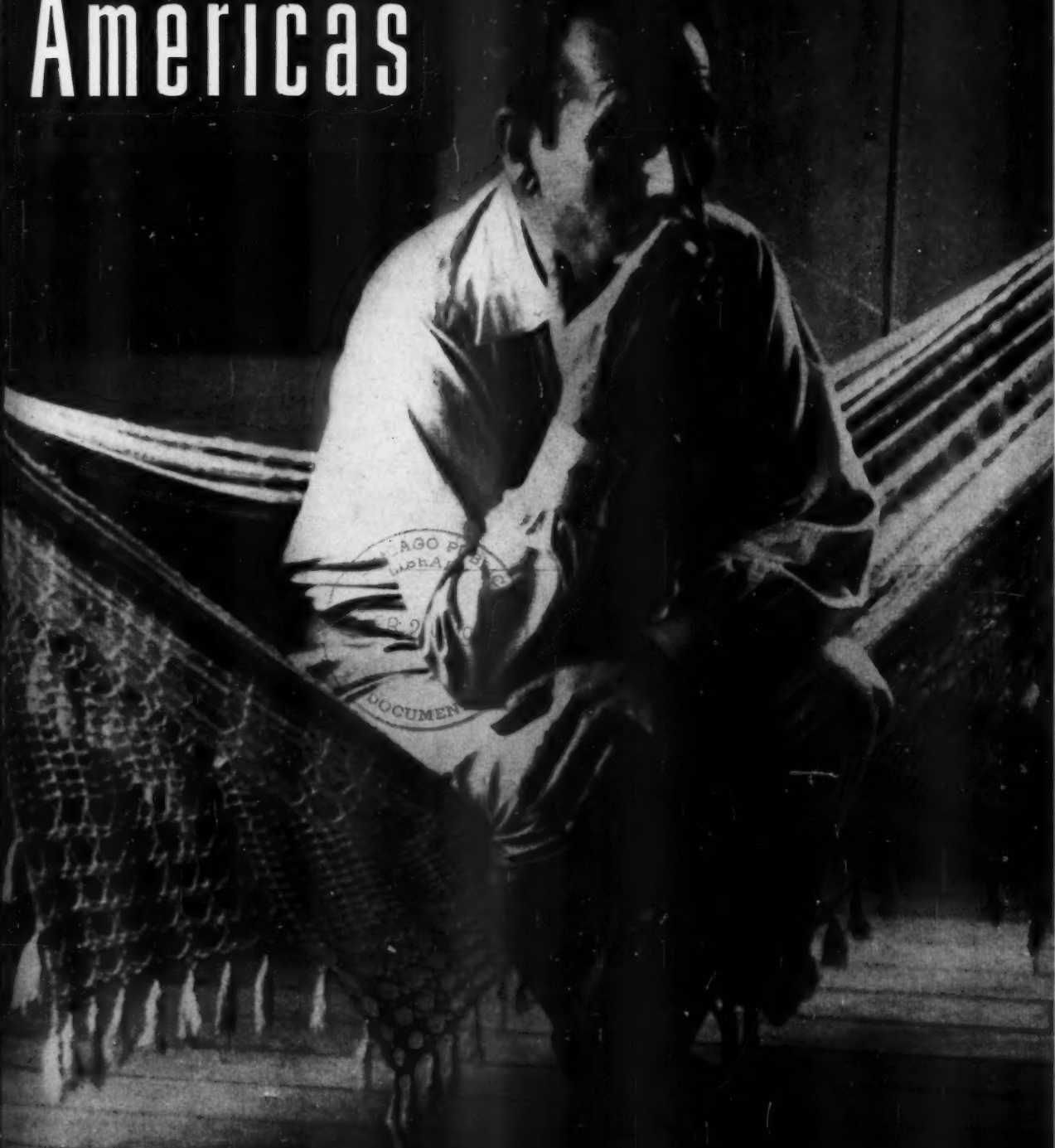


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Volume 12, Number 2, February 1960

published in English, Spanish, and Portuguese

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Cover

Cássio M'Boy, Brazilian painter, at home in small town with which he has identified himself (see page 12).

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MEMO FROM THE EDITORS

● Richard L. Shaw has been in Guatemala since 1955 with a mission established there at the request of the Government by the management-consultant firm Klein & Saks. Thus he knows from first-hand observation how "The Flour of San Vicente" can change a child's future. On page 3 he tells the full story of this amazing new product.

● Long an admirer of Manuel Gutiérrez Nájera, Boyd G. Carter, professor of Romance languages at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale, published *Manuel Gutiérrez Nájera, Estudio y Escritos Inéditos* in 1956, and Ediciones Botas will soon be bringing out *En Torno a Gutiérrez Nájera y las Letras Mexicanas del Siglo XIX*. Dr. Carter wrote "By Any Other Name" (on page 8) in celebration of the centennial of the death of the noted Mexican poet who was so given to using pseudonyms.

● On page 12 Rubens Teixeira Scavone of Brazil tells how "Cássio M'Boy Paints His World." Now an official of the São Paulo city government, Mr. Scavone has been writing stories and articles for Brazilian periodicals since his college days. His favorite subjects are art, literature, and the theater.

● After retiring from the advertising business in 1946, Samuel Kaplan took off for Mexico City, and he has been living and writing there ever since. On page 18 he describes the Mexican Government's efforts to make underprivileged children feel "At Home in School."

● Hugo Ezequiel Lezama, an Argentine journalist, has been an editor and movie critic of the magazine *El Hogar*, editorial writer on the daily *El Mundo*, and book critic of *La Gaceta* of Tucumán and the magazine *Criterio*. For AMÉRICAS he interviewed several top humorists and naturally concluded that "They Make Argentina Laugh" (see page 22).

● This month's short story—"The Azalea," on page 28—is by Luis A. Heiremans. A member of the controversial "1950 Generation" of Chilean writers, he has published two books of short stories but is better known as a dramatist.

● An assistant auditor at the PAU, Abdón P. Álvarez is a graduate of the University of Paraguay School of Business Administration and has done graduate work in library science at the University of Michigan. He has been writing as a sideline since 1944, when he published a book on his country's ministers of foreign affairs. Though he has traveled and worked in the United States and Mexico during the past two years, he has kept in touch with his homeland and still knows "Paraguay Today" (see page 31).

● After this issue another familiar name leaves our masthead, one that has been on it since the very beginning, March 1949. First as Betty Wilson and then, after her marriage, as Betty Robinson, she has been a mainstay on the English edition of AMÉRICAS. She will surely be missed, by staff members and readers alike.

onite: Pre-Columbian stone sculpture from Bolivia,
in Musée de l'Homme, Paris

THE OAS

IN ACTION

ONE ACTION, ONE DECISION

As the year 1959 drew to a close, the American republics hastened to make their dream of a regional development bank a reality, while they put off their scheduled top-level general conference.

For a while, there had been some worry that the various countries' congresses might be late for the ratification deadline set in the Inter-American Development Bank agreement. That was December 31, 1959, by which time members representing 85 per cent of the agency's \$850,000,000 authorized stock had to complete the process in order for the Bank to come into existence. Argentina and the United States started the ball rolling by depositing their instruments of ratification at the Pan American Union on October 14, followed in the ensuing weeks by Haiti, Guatemala, the Dominican Republic, Paraguay, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Honduras, and Panama. Then, on December 30, Bolivia, Brazil, Costa Rica, Mexico, and Peru made their participation official, bringing the stock subscriptions to a decisive 87.87 per cent of the authorized total.

The Inter-American Development Bank's Board of Governors, on which each member has a seat, will hold its first meeting in San Salvador beginning February 3. It will set up the organization of the Bank, electing a president for the institution and six executive directors to join the one appointed by the United States as the largest stockholder. These executive directors will supervise continuing operations.

Of the \$850,000,000 stock, \$400,000,000 must be paid in, with the remainder callable only to meet Bank obligations created by borrowing or by guarantees made. The authorized stock quotas range from \$350,000,000 for the United States down to \$4,140,000 for each of seven small countries. Payment of the paid-in shares will be staggered over three years, 20 per cent the first year and 40 per cent in each of the next two. Half must be in gold and/or dollars; the rest can be in the member's own currency.

In addition to this regular capital, there is a Fund for Special Operations totaling \$150,000,000, two thirds of it to be contributed by the United States.

The Bank is intended to supplement existing international and national agencies, and will try to promote both public and private investment for

development aims, not take business away from anyone. Operations with its regular funds will be on a strict banking basis, with loans repayable in the currency or currencies in which they are made. The Fund for Special Operations, in contrast, will be able to make loans that will be partially or wholly repayable in the local currency of the country where the project being financed is to be carried out. This is to cover things that may be essential to development but that do not directly produce income; road, port, school, and sanitation projects, for example, might fall in this category. Further details of the Bank's structure and operating methods were given in this section in our June 1959 issue.

On the same day that the Bank was born, December 30, the OAS Council, heeding the suggestion of the host country, Ecuador, voted to postpone the Eleventh Inter-American Conference, which was to have opened in Quito this month. A new date will not be chosen until March 30.

ARMS AND THE HEMISPHERE

Ambassador Walter Müller of Chile took this occasion to report on Chilean President Jorge Alessandri's declaration calling for an end to the arms race in Latin America. Citing the arms-limitation proposal made in the Council in March 1958 by the then Costa Rican Ambassador, Gonzalo Facio, and the similar item included in the Quito Conference agenda, proposed by Ambassador Gonzalo Escudero of Ecuador, he declared that unnecessary expenditures on armaments are holding up economic development and the satisfaction of urgent human needs. Without making an official proposal, he stated his government's belief that a preparatory meeting and a specialized conference on the balance and limitation of arms should be held before the Eleventh Conference or any inter-American political conference.

Several speakers cited their governments' efforts along the same lines. Ambassador Juan Bautista de Lavalle of Peru mentioned the declarations on the subject by Peruvian President Manuel Prado. Colombian representative Santiago Salazar referred to President Alberto Lleras' message to President Prado on the arms-limitation proposal, in which he called for a prior study of the problem to be made by the Inter-American Defense Board. Ambassador Escudero suggested that, in further consideration of the idea of a specialized arms conference, the effective strengthening of the inter-American system of collective security be included along with arms limitation, as in the Quito agenda item. He reiterated an Ecuadorian proposal for a small volunteer inter-American emergency force, to provide rapid, if largely symbolic, application of the Rio Treaty in situations that threaten the peace.

the flour of San Vicente

*Central America
fights malnutrition*

ON AUGUST 25, 1959, the picturesque little town of Palín in the highlands of Guatemala became the center of a new kind of revolution—a revolution that could well overthrow one of the oldest enemies of the underdeveloped countries: malnutrition, particularly among younger children. A small cellophane-wrapped package containing a powdered substance called Incaparina, which went on sale for three cents that day in Palín, is the major weapon.

Sociologists, economists, and other experts in related fields have long realized that living conditions that cause a high infant-mortality rate can exist within an economy that may be fully capable of producing the basic foods required by the population. However, how to break the cycle of low wages and low output, accompanied by high-cost production and marketing of nutritive foods, is still a problem. Mechanization of agriculture, improved transportation systems, industrialization, and the like probably will provide the eventual solution. But in the meantime, child-mortality rates in Central America—stemming for the most part, either directly or indirectly, from a lack of proper foods during the pre-school years—are running as high as thirty to forty per thousand in comparison with a one-per-thousand rate in the United States and in Europe.

Incaparina, like so many significant scientific discoveries, is based on a surprisingly simple formula. The major ingredients—cottonseed meal, corn, and sorghum—are already produced, or can be produced, in abundance in most of the heavily populated areas of the world. Where rice is the customary staple food, it can be substituted for the corn without reducing the mixture's nutritive value at all. Thus, since it can be made from inexpensive and readily available commodities, Incaparina meets a major economic requirement. The rest of the formula, about 4 per cent of the whole, consists of calcium carbonate (ordinary limestone), readily available everywhere; Torula yeast, derived from brewer's yeast or molasses; and vitamin A. When the market warrants, it will be a simple process to produce the Torula yeast anywhere; for the present it is easily obtainable from established sources. The vitamin A is such a small part of the mixture that importing it from existing sources in the United States and Europe will present no problem.

INCAPARINA
INCAPARINA
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INCAPARINA

RICHARD L. SHAW

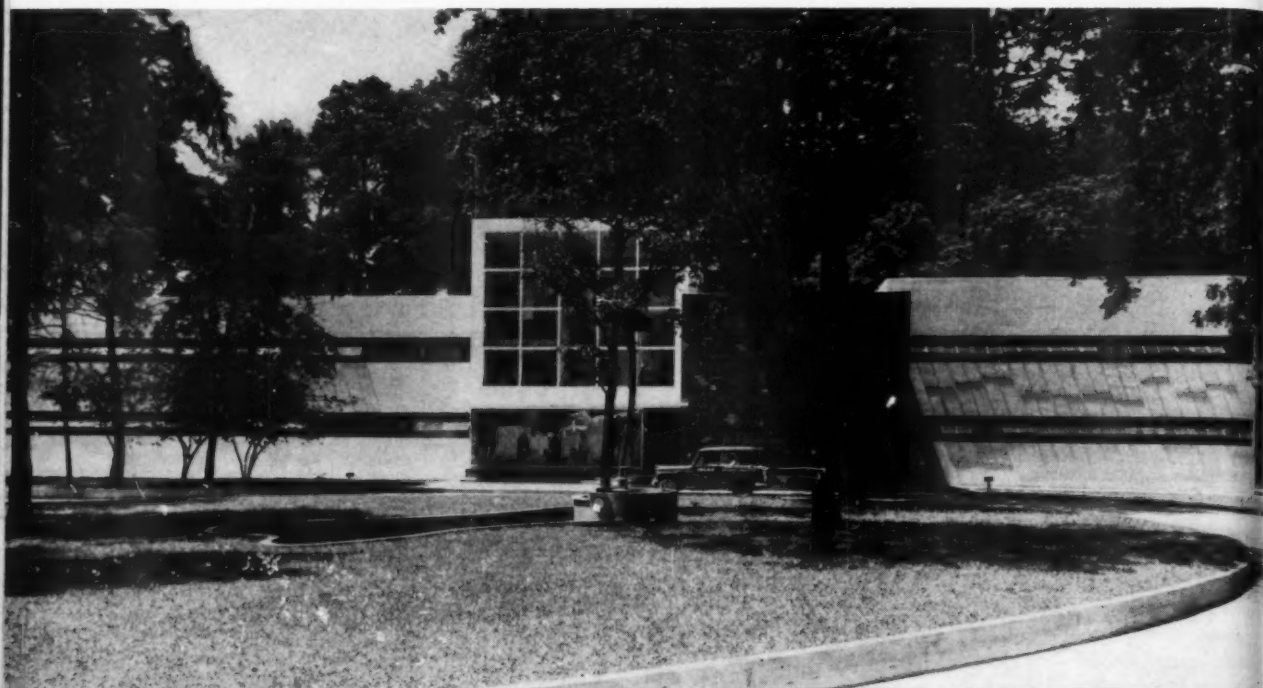
So almost any country can produce Incaparina from products that are grown within its borders, a circumstance of fundamental importance to the developing countries, which are becoming increasingly aware of drains on their foreign exchange.

Similarly, the preparation of Incaparina for retail distribution is a relatively simple matter. The ingredients are merely ground to the consistency of flour with milling equipment, then mixed. Several types of packaging machines pack the product quickly and attractively, in almost any style of plastic or paper container. This, together with the availability of the materials, accounts for its low cost and its possibilities for mass marketing.

Moreover, Incaparina, as prepared now, does not require any changes in the dietary habits of the people of Central America. Very little additional research would be required to adapt it to other diets. In its present form it is readily soluble in water, and a few minutes'

Dr. Ricardo Bressani, who collaborated with Dr. Moisés Behar on discovery of Incaparina. Both are Guatemalan





Headquarters of Nutrition Institute of Central America and Panama, in Guatemala City, was contributed by Guatemalan Government

cooking produces a drink popularly known throughout Central America as *atole*. Customarily, *atole* has been made only of corn with a little flavoring added and has very limited nutritive value. The *atole* made from Incaparina, on the other hand, contains essentially the same quality and amount of protein and as much vitamin A as fresh milk. Three cents' worth will provide a person with the three glasses per day needed to supplement the low-protein diet on which many of the world's people are now trying to live. Doctors, nurses, and social workers will have something they can recommend with some degree of financial realism. To suggest that parents give their children milk, which costs about five cents a glass, in an area where the head of a large family might make a dollar a day or less, is frustrating, if not downright ridiculous. Much has been done to increase the availability of milk in many countries, and UNICEF and other organizations have distributed powdered milk in large quantities. But these steps have not kept pace with the mounting requirements. Furthermore, the problems of sanitary production and distribution of milk will probably continue to keep it beyond the reach of many families, particularly in tropical regions.

Who was responsible for developing Incaparina, and what prompted its discovery? This unusual product is the culmination of more than eight years' intensive research by a unique scientific organization that celebrated its tenth anniversary last year. Throughout Central America it is known simply as INCAP, the initials of the Spanish name for the Nutrition Institute of Central America and Panama. The Institute grew out of a suggestion of Dr. Robert S. Harris, a distinguished professor of

nutrition at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Dr. Harris, through his contacts with students from Latin America, was impressed by the lack of facilities for scientific research on nutrition problems in their homelands. Through his initiative, the Kellogg Foundation and the Pan American Sanitary Bureau joined forces to establish INCAP, in one of the areas of the world where nutrition problems are, and will probably long continue to be, serious.

The main idea behind INCAP was for it to be a regional institution that would stay close to the people it was to

Susana Icaza of Panama, INCAP nutrition-education chief, teaches auxiliaries in Palín how to mix *atole* from new product



serve and to the acute problem it was to solve. Of necessity, much of its early financial support came from outside Central America. There have been grants from the Pan American Sanitary Bureau (eighty thousand dollars in 1959 alone) and from private foundations in the United States. The governments of Costa Rica, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama put up the rest, a total of about \$105,000 a year. Guatemala contributed the fine modern headquarters and laboratory in Guatemala City. Hence there is a pride of



After drinking Incaparina mixture for only three months . . .

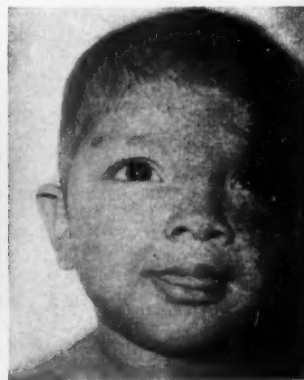
accomplishment among the countries and a feeling that this is their own project—an intangible advantage that no foreign-aid program can quite achieve.

Perhaps even more significant is the fact that of the seventy eager, competent staff members only one is not a native-born Latin American. The single "outsider" is the aggressive young director, Dr. Nevin Scrimshaw, whose vision, dedication, and ability to inspire his co-workers have helped INCAP to achieve the world-wide recognition it enjoys today. He has also shown a remarkable ability to work closely with all the presidents and cabinet ministers of the participating republics, which is essential for any administrator of an international agency.

Though there have been excellent medical doctors in

the area for years, the highly specialized skills needed for scientific work in nutrition were not available when the Institute was started. Rather than bring in trained workers from other countries, the founders adopted the more difficult but much sounder policy of developing research talent among the Central Americans and Panamanians. This meant carefully selecting young men and women and sending them to the United States and elsewhere for advanced scientific training. Scholarships were arranged with universities, foundations, and international organizations. Many well-known U.S. universities—Rochester, Vanderbilt, California, Minnesota, Iowa State, Harvard, Cornell, and others—cooperated to the fullest. This long-range program has demanded hard work and sacrifice from these young Central American professionals, many of whom now have doctorates in various specialized fields. The result has been a top-flight staff of biochemists, clinical pathologists, organic chemists, statisticians, pediatricians, nutritionists, and public-health specialists capable of doing the painstaking research necessary to produce a truly new food product like Incaparina (two Guatemalans, Drs. Ricardo Bressani and Moisés Behar, shared the major responsibility for this discovery).

Despite its obvious nutritional value, Incaparina would be of no practical use if it were not acceptable to children and parents alike. To find out whether or not it would be, Dr. Romeo de León of INCAP and the Guatemalan Department of Health planned and carried out an elaborate series of field tests. The towns of Escuintla, Zacapa, Quezaltenango, and Amatitlán—all in Guatemala—were selected for the trials. Quezaltenango, the second largest city in the country, has a large Indian population and the cool highland climate that, surprisingly enough, is typical



. . . tragically undernourished infants grow plump and healthy

of many of the most heavily populated areas of the Latin American tropics. Zacapa is in a hot dry region; Escuintla, in the humid coastal area. Amatitlán enjoys moderate springlike weather. The economic and cultural patterns vary too. Together, these four towns are representative of most of Central America and of many other underdeveloped parts of the world as well.

The government-operated free clinic was the center of operations in each place. Doctors, nurses, and social



At INCAP tenth-anniversary ceremony in September 1959, from left: Dr. Nevin Scrimshaw, Institute director; Guatemalan Minister of Public Health and Social Welfare, Dr. Mariano López Herrarte; and Dr. Miguel Ydígoras Fuentes, President of Guatemala



Typical marketplace in Guatemala. In towns like this throughout Central America, Incaparina is vital, especially for children

workers from INCAP and the Ministry of Health distributed the Incaparina free to mothers who were willing to prepare the *atole* for their children. As the experiment progressed, they checked regularly the growth and health of the children involved. During the four-month test cooperation came naturally, since these people are known

throughout the area for their dedicated service.

The results of this test—weight gains and general health improvement—exceeded all the predictions that had been made on the basis of exhaustive laboratory studies. Among other things, it was revealed that 80 per cent of the children given the Incaparina *atole* not only liked it but drank it eagerly. Over 75 per cent drank two or three glasses a day for the entire period. Moreover, the parents were impressed by Incaparina and frequently asked when it would be available for sale—which was particularly significant, since the ultimate decision to reject or accept a commercial product is made by the adults.

While these trials proved conclusively that Incaparina was both acceptable and practical, it would remain, as Dr. Scrimshaw expressed it, "a laboratory curiosity until it was widely manufactured and successfully sold through regular commercial channels." The next step was clear. Incaparina would have to be tested for marketability, and skeptical businessmen would have to be interested in producing it. The firm of Klein & Saks, management and economic consultants and advisers to the Guatemalan Government, made a preliminary survey. With this as a basis, it then prepared an estimate of the manufacturing and distribution costs, based on production for the Guatemalan market. It was found that Incaparina could be sold at retail in Guatemala for eighteen cents a pound, or three cents each for the small bags containing enough to make three glasses of the *atole*. This seemed reasonable enough for a product having the qualities of milk, and presumably was within the reach of even the lowest-income groups. Ample margins were allowed to make investment attractive to any potential producers and to cover the initial promotion and distribution costs. In addition, the price covered a small service fee to INCAP,

the holder of the basic patents. This last will not materially affect the retail price, but it will help to compensate INCAP for the estimated half million dollars invested in past and present research.

Next, the situation was discussed with representatives of industry and commerce in Guatemala. INCAP had wisely decided that the product would be distributed more rapidly and more widely through private enterprise. Though some local investors were reluctant to consider it seriously, one group did respond most favorably and volunteered to participate in conducting the marketing trials. The offer was accepted, and Palín was selected for the first retail sales. Until then the town had been known primarily as a tourist attraction for its colorful outdoor market and the gigantic ceiba tree that shades the entire main plaza. It is also one of the many small Guatemalan towns where more than half of the residents are Indians who still adhere to the customs, traditions, and dress of their ancestors. This and several other factors played a part in the choice of Palín.

After the official announcement to the press by the Guatemalan Minister of Health, the distributor placed the first batch in several small general stores, which are the main outlets for this sort of thing in Palín and throughout most of rural Central America. The first surprise was that all of the small merchants were so genuinely interested in Incaparina and so sure it would sell that they wanted to pay cash rather than take advantage of the credit arrangements customary in such transactions. Their intuition was amply justified: they were calling for additional shipments before the end of the first week. Incaparina was soon selling in Palín at a rate of about 150 bags a day. (The Indians were among the most eager buyers—contrary to the notion that they tend to be rather reticent about accepting new ideas, though anthropologists say that they only need to be convinced

that it is in their own best interest to do so.) A definite assist in putting it across came from the active endorsement of the local Health Center and the schools in the area. At the end of the first month forty-five hundred bags had been sold, and the demand was steadily increasing.

An admittedly tentative projection of this marketing experience to the entire Guatemalan market would indicate a potential consumption of about twenty tons of Incaparina a day. Certainly enough to support a sizable new industry. And this is the purely commercial aspect, with no thought for the obvious benefits to the thousands of children in Guatemala and in other countries with similar economies. In fact, the prospect is exciting enough to interest one of the largest diversified corporations now operating in Latin America. The company has already made arrangements to extend the sale of Incaparina to all of Guatemala as rapidly as possible. Incaparina has also acquired a nickname, a sure sign of acceptance in Guatemala: it is now referred to in Palín as "the flour of San Vicente," in honor of one of the near-by volcanoes.

Dr. Aaron M. Altschul, a prominent U.S. Department of Agriculture scientist, has summed up INCAP's achievement in these words: "The animal represents, one might say, an unsophisticated approach towards the manufacture of protein foods of suitable quality. This is fine when it can be afforded; but as the demands of society increase, it is obvious that there are large areas where this cannot be afforded. Then the question arises whether there exists in our technology and in our knowledge of the chemistry of food sufficient sophistication to manufacture food of equivalent value without the animal. The program of INCAP is one example of such a sophisticated approach; this is an area in human progress that is exciting to contemplate." ☞

"Health . . . with Incaparina!" Three-cent package contains essentially same protein value and as much vitamin A as three glasses of fresh milk



By Any Other Name



Manuel Gutiérrez Nájera of Mexico

BOYD G. CARTER

"DUQUE JOB is so sick that his life is feared for. The Duque's friends love him; his associates esteem him and everyone who has had the pleasure of reading his writings admires him."

This commentary referring to Manuel Gutiérrez Nájera appeared in a leading Mexico City review on January 27, 1895. A week later, on February 3, it was announced that the poet had died—not "as the day ends, on the high seas, and with my face toward heaven," as he had expressed the wish in his famous poem "Para Entonces [For Then]," but in his house on the street now known as Avenida República del Brasil, number 46, surrounded by his wife Cecilia, his daughters Cecilia and Margarita, and a few friends.

The centenary of Manuel Gutiérrez Nájera's birth in Mexico City took place this past December 22. The

anniversary is being observed by the publication in book form, for the first time, of many of his writings and of numerous articles and even book-length studies about him, his works, and his time. The distinguished Nicaraguan Hispanist, poet, and critic Ernesto Mejía Sánchez has been authorized by the National University of Mexico to prepare an edition of his complete works in collaboration with Professor E. K. Mapes of the State University of Iowa. Last year the Fondo de Cultura Económica published his *Cuentos Completos y Otras Narraciones* (Complete Stories and Other Narratives) in an edition prepared by Professor Mapes. This contains many stories not previously published in book form, and its value is enhanced by a prefatory study of great critical importance by Francisco González Guerrero, who published a two-volume edition of Gutiérrez Nájera's poetry in 1953.

When Professor Mapes set out in 1936 to microfilm his writings, he found the task of identifying the different signatures of Gutiérrez Nájera as tedious as it was baffling and challenging to his investigative ingenuity. Indeed, no other Mexican writer of the last century made such versatile use of pseudonyms. Fourteen were already known, and Professor Mapes discovered seven more, exclusive of spelling variations in signatures already identified. It has now been established that Gutiérrez Nájera wrote under twenty-five to thirty different names, among them El Duque Job, Can-Can, El Cura de Jalatlaco, Pomponnet, Fru-Fru, Junius, Nemo, Puck, Omega, Gil Blas, and Juan Lanas.

Why so many? I think he gives us the clue in the following sentence published in *El Partido Liberal* on April 20, 1885: "I live *exclusively* by my pen." The italic is his. A year earlier (in *La Libertad*, February 12, 1884) he had this to say about pseudonyms: "Writing without a pseudonym is like going out on the street without a shirt. For a writer's ideas to be esteemed, no one must know who he is. No one will ever believe that the fellow he has just been playing billiards with can be a man of talent."

Another advantage of pseudonyms for a professional writer of that time consisted in the curiosity their use aroused in readers' minds. Moreover, the use of a diversity of signatures freed the writer from the need to be more or less consistent in his attitudes and controversial positions. For example, Gutiérrez Nájera could attack a writer behind the anonymity of "Puck" and defend him behind that of "Fru-Fru." Sometimes, under one of his pseudonyms, he attacked himself under another. Like Poe, he delighted in hoaxes, and the use of pseudonyms offered him endless opportunities to mystify his readers and to keep them guessing. And the annoying thing is that when he changed pseudonyms he also changed character. The ability to divide his personality into so many pseudonymous reincarnations must be regarded as one of the most extraordinary talents of this remarkable journalist and man of letters.

For several months Gutiérrez Nájera had been signing his "Memorias de un Vagabundo" in *El Cronista de México* with the name Pomponnet. On October 23, 1880, Pomponnet observes that just "as trees lose their green leaves in October, your humble servant loses his intellectual foliage in October, that is to say, his style. Little by little my chronicles have been getting sober and lusterless. At certain times of the year birds change their feathers. I, like such birds, am going to molt. Style is a writer's plumage.

"For this reason, but depending, of course, on your approval, I have enlisted the efficacious help of my 'alter ego,' the famous vagabond named M. Can-Can, to whom I yield command in the winter season." Then Pomponnet introduced his successor. "It is my honor to present M. Can-Can, French by birth, a vagabond by profession, with thirty-five years of age and the income of forty-two Englishmen per week for capital assets."

El Duque's contemporaries and many critics in the twentieth century have insisted on his indebtedness to

the French. Justo Sierra, eminent scholar, writer, and teacher, and guiding spirit in the reorganization of the National University of Mexico, writes in his prologue to the first edition of Gutiérrez Nájera's poems that his literary motto was "French thoughts in Spanish verses." There can be no doubt of his fondness for France and things French. Even the most casual perusal of his works suffices to confirm it. However, rather than of "French thoughts in Spanish verses," I think it more proper and correct to speak of spiritual and intellectual empathies and affinities. Indeed, what is involved in the case of Gutiérrez Nájera's attraction to French civilization bears analogy to the type of intellectual and spiritual affinity Baudelaire felt for Poe. One must speak of influence in such cases with extreme caution. The matter more likely involves a recognition of identity rather than the assimilation of difference. The end result of such encounters is extension and perhaps minimal modification of artistic temperaments rather than substitution and fundamental transformation. Francisco González Guerrero is right when he affirms that Gutiérrez Nájera, "contrary to what is thoughtlessly said, is one of the poets who reflect the Mexican national character with complete authenticity."

Gutiérrez Nájera's writings reflect the cosmopolitan scope and variety of his interests, which, in the same week, might range from comments on a French book, Wagner's music, a play by Shakespeare, and the ideas of Max Nordau to a social event, a dramatic performance, an opera, or life in the streets of the capital. Concerning his susceptibility to literary and cultural currents during the early years of his career, Justo Sierra observes: "It may be said that the first ten or twelve years of Gutiérrez Nájera's literary life (1876-1888) were marked by constant excursions amidst many influences, approaching and reflecting them all, delighted, surprised, impressed, on dipping into the currents of new writers and showing at times on the surface of the waves, like Heredia's dogfish, his flashing fin of emerald and gold."

Gutiérrez Nájera's biography, is, therefore, essentially the story of his career as a journalist. The only book he published during his life was a collection of stories entitled *Cuentos Frágiles* that appeared in 1883. Otherwise, his writings were scattered among the pages of the more than thirty publications to which he contributed.

El Duque Job, as he was affectionately called, this being his most famous pseudonym, was a tireless worker. He once lamented the fact that a day had twenty-four instead of twenty-eight hours. In the morning he was the first to the office, being an early riser. With a cigar in his mouth and a gardenia in his lapel, he wrote serenely and smoothly, oblivious of the noise about him. We read in *Revista Azul*: "He wrote without effort, at times as rapidly as he could move his hand mechanically across the paper. We have, as a precious souvenir, the original of a 'Chronicle on Othello' written for *El Universal*: there is not a single blur, an erased word, a hesitation, or an awkward stroke; the page is all of a piece, his ideas emerged in the marvelous form typical of him." He did two or more articles daily in addition to the hack work

that a journalist of his time had to perform with scissors and paste. He also wrote prologues for books, verses for albums (in those days every girl had her album, and Gutiérrez Nájera, like other poets, was harassed by the beauties to write verses just for them), and translations. "A feverish activity consumed him. . . . Indefatigably he read everything new that was printed: reviews, novels, volumes of verses, critical works," says the article in the *Revista Azul*.

This review, which Gutiérrez Nájera founded in collaboration with Luis Urbina and Carlos Díaz Dufóo, deserves special mention among his literary achievements. The first number appeared on May 6, 1894; the last number of the five volumes of the series appeared on October 11, 1896.

Why the title *Revista Azul*? The explanations and hypotheses are too numerous to consider here in detail. In his *Breve Historia del Modernismo*, Max Henríquez Ureña conjectures a composite origin for it involving recollections of *La Revue Bleue* of Paris, Rubén Darío's book *Azul*, and such compositions of Gutiérrez Nájera's own youth as the poem "Del Libro Azul." In his poem "Luz y Sombra [Light and Shadow]" (1876), there is a significant line that critics have largely overlooked: "Thy conscience is white and thy thought blue." Moreover, a poem by the Spanish poet Antonio Grilo called "Tu Traje Azul [Thy Blue Dress]" was published in a Mexican periodical in 1874; it undoubtedly attracted the attention of young Manuel, avid and omnivorous reader that he was. Also, the adjective "blue" is used quite frequently by Victor Hugo, a favorite of El Duque as of most Latin Americans of the time, especially in his book of poems *Les Orientales*.

The literary content of *Revista Azul* was both creative and critical. The editors published a profusion of short stories, in the original or in translation, most of the latter from the French. In fact, nearly every notable French writer of the time appeared in the review. Under the headings "Páginas Nuevas [New Pages]," "Páginas Olvidadas [Forgotten Pages]," or "Páginas Escogidas [Selected Pages]," selections from novels, again mostly French, were published. Essays abound—original and in translation, on a great diversity of topics ranging from music to drama criticisms, from aesthetics to religion, and from genre sketches to chit-chat on artistic events and personalities.

The *Revista Azul* stands as the tangible culminating effort of Manuel Gutiérrez Nájera's heroic dedication to literature for a period of more than twenty years. In the words of Francisco González Guerrero, "The *Revista Azul* stands out in the history of Mexican letters as one of the peaks most clearly visible through the distance of time." In this publication, his integrity and aspirations found a vehicle in which his thought, fancy, and poetic creativeness, in company with those of writers from many countries, could travel in untrammelled freedom and dignity towards cerulean landscapes. It is unfortunate that he had so little time to travel in the vehicle he himself built.

At the time of his death on February 3, 1895, Gutiérrez

Nájera, barely turned thirty-six, had behind him a record of extraordinary achievement and before him the promise that maturity unfolds for genius that has survived and triumphed over the facile attainments of precocity. In the opinion of many of his contemporaries, Manuel was the victim of his environment: "He was a soldier and like a soldier he fell upon the breach, his body covered with scars, waving the flag that was to cover his corpse. . . .; after many years of struggle he found himself in the same situation as when he began, needing to wage battle twenty-four hours a day to defray his minimum daily expenses. And it was thus that death overtook him: on the field of battle."

Gutiérrez Nájera had the gift of stylistic gracefulness to such a degree that he could use it to dominate his theme, play with it, leave it to develop a serious note, then again put it expertly under the focus of brilliant kaleidoscopic imaginative illuminations. One seldom feels that the subject dominates the writer; on the contrary, one feels that the writer, even when he digresses, always knows where he is going on a road of his own choosing. The aesthetic result is nearly always one that satisfies and delights the reader.

The 210 poems known to be by Gutiérrez Nájera or attributed to him encompass love, religious fervor and doubt, philosophic despair, death, nostalgia, melancholy, graceful badinage, tone poems, light satire, autobiographical notes, reflections on art, and numerous other themes. Some cannot well be translated; they measure up to the Abbé Brémond's concept of "*poésie pure*" and their appeal is more in their incantatory musical qualities than in their meaning. But the following lines from a few of his poems exemplify his range and achievement.

These from "La Duquesa Job" show his jocular, effervescent, witty side:

*En dulce charla de sobremesa,
mientras devoro fresa tras fresa
y abajo ronca tu perro Bob,
te haré el retrato de la duquesa
que adora a veces el Duque Job.*

Chatting around the table after dinner,
as I devour strawberry after strawberry,
and your dog Bob snores underneath,
I'll do you a portrait of the duchess
whom the Duque Job sometimes adores.

"De Blanco [Of White]" belongs within the current of aesthetic preoccupation with color initiated by the Romanticists, developed by the art-for-art's-sakists (particularly Gautier), and systematically cultivated by many modernista poets.

*¿Qué cosa más blanca que cándido lirio?
¿Qué cosa más pura que místico cirio?
¿Qué cosa más casta que tierno azahar?
¿Qué cosa más santa que el ara divina
de gótico altar?*

What is whiter than the spotless lily?
What is purer than the mystic taper?
What is more chaste than the delicate
[orange blossom]
What is more holy than the divine slab
of the Gothic altar?

In "Ondas Muertas [Dead Waves]" doubt, despair, and frustration are symbolically equated with subterranean streams:

*En la sombra debajo de tierra,
donde nunca llegó la mirada,
se deslizan en curso infinito
silenciosas corrientes de agua.*

In the shadow underground
Never reached by sight,
There glide in endless course
Silent currents of water.

"Mis Enlutadas [My Mourners]" provides another example of the tortured inner life of this poet who, in his professional and social life, was always cheerful, gay, polite, and even-mannered.

*Descienden taciturnas las tristezas
al fondo de mi alma,
y entumecidas, haraposas brujas,
con uñas negras
mi vida escargan.
De sangre es el color de sus pupilas,
de nieve son sus lágrimas;
hondo pavor infunden . . . Yo las amo
por ser las solas
que me acompañan.*

Silently, melancholies slip
deep into my soul
And there like numb, ragged witches
with black fingernails
they scratch my life.
The color of their eyes is like to blood,
their ears to snow;
They fill me with terror. . . I love them
because they alone
do keep me company.

Gutiérrez Nájera gave poetic expression to his disappointments in love. This pessimistic reflection is taken from "Carta Abierta [Open Letter]."

*¡Amor es un laúd, es una lira
que vibra en el espacio y enmudece!
amor es una Ofelia que suspira . . .
no la queráis tocar . . . ¡se desvanece!
Love is a lute, love is a lyre
Which mutes and vibrates in the spheres!
Love is Ophelia all in sighs. . .
If you touch her, she disappears.*

Gutiérrez Nájera had the knack, to an extraordinary degree, of illustrating moods, concepts, and thoughts with visually picturesque images. From "Tras los Montes [Beyond the Hills]" comes:

*Y a veces la luciérnaga parece
una lágrima de oro entre las hojas . . .
Y negra nube atravesando el cielo
como gigante vibora se anuda.
And sometimes the glowworm seems
A golden tear among the leaves. . .
And a black cloud crossing the sky
Twists itself into a gigantic snake.*

And from "Tristissima Nox [Saddest of Nights]," this Baudelairean evocation of a nightmare:

*Ata nuestra garganta férreo nudo,
y entre el bullicio de la turba loca
sentimos del murciélago velludo
las repugnantes alas en la boca.
Our throat is tied in an iron knot
And amidst the mad throng's din
Within our mouth the hairy bat
Shakes his foul repugnant wings.*

Only the Muse can be counted on to "never deceive or forget or abandon," as he says in "Musa Blanca." In "A Justo Sierra" he adds:

*En medio del dolor y de la duda
el arte es nuestra sola recompensa.*

Surrounded by grief and doubt,
In art we find our only recompense.

The following lines from "Nada Es Mío [Nothing Is Mine]" have an autobiographical as well as an aesthetic significance:

*Yo no escribo mis versos, no los creo;
viven dentro de mí; vienen de fuera . . .
Yo escucho nada más, y dejo abiertas
de mi curioso espíritu las puertas.
Los versos entran sin pedir permiso;
mi espíritu es su casa . . .*

I don't write my verses, I don't create them;
they live within me; they come from without. . .
I simply listen and leave open
the doors of my curious mind and heart.
The verses enter without asking permission;
my spirit is their home. . .

What did his contemporaries think of this man who is generally considered (though some critics give priority to José Martí) the precursor of *modernismo*, one of Spanish America's great poets and prose writers, and one of the few Mexican writers to earn his livelihood exclusively with his pen?

As a person, "absolutely no one spoke ill of him"; he was "kindly," "a merry companion," a "good friend"; he was a "good man, with the heart of a child, a brother"; "he never made anyone feel inferior"; "this good and illustrious man" had "an exquisite soul, a serene, tender, and luminous spirit" that manifested itself "with great delicacy and transparent purity."

In the opinion of Justo Sierra, the most striking essential element in the work of Gutiérrez Nájera is *la gracia*, or charm, which "shines through all the themes of his admirable compositions in prose or verse." He called him "the most delicately sensual and elegant of our lyric poets."

Later opinion confirms that of Gutiérrez Nájera's colleagues. Arturo Torres-Rioseco believes that "as an exquisite and subjective poet, [he] is not surpassed by any other poet in the Spanish language." Federico de Onís says that "his personality in life as in art is composed of a rare and delicate mixture of charm and melancholy, of elegance and profundity." And Octavio Paz writes, in the notes to his *Anthology of Mexican Poetry*: "Gutiérrez Nájera was one of the first 'pure literati' of Mexico. . . This poet had a great influence in his own day, and on the generation immediately following. With grace and melancholy he shakes the old timbers of the language." The debt owed to him by Rubén Darío is widely mentioned by critics. Like Darío, he also left his mark on prose style; indeed, it is generally conceded that Gutiérrez Nájera's influence was even greater on prose than on poetry.

When his literary significance is fully understood and appreciated and is brought into proper contemporary focus, it may well be that his contributions in terms of originality, innovation, achievement, and sacrificial dedication to literature will accord him a position in Mexican letters somewhat similar to that of Poe in U.S. literature. Both were literary titans and martyrs. ☞



CÁSSIO M'BOY PAINTS HIS WORLD

RUBENS TEIXEIRA SCAVONE

MUCH has been written in Brazil about Cássio M'Boy's paintings. Undoubtedly, they are one of the most legitimate examples of truly Brazilian art, and they are of more than aesthetic interest, for they represent the folklore and ways of a social group that is on the way to extinction.

Cássio M'Boy is classed as a primitive in the broad sense of the word—as a teacher, a teller of tales through an ingenuous and childlike art. Using figures and colors instead of the written word, always seeking marvels, he revives popular rites, fables and legends, traditions and myths, stories rooted in the subconscious of many generations.

But, in order to understand the meaning of Cássio's work, we must know the man and his kind of primitivism.

Aside from the classical significance of the term—the

traditional concept dating from the twelfth-century work of certain Byzantine and early Renaissance artisan-painters—"primitive" painting has two different meanings. In the first, a primitive is a spontaneous, innate painter who, without training or the slightest notion of the most elementary rules of drawing or painting, is driven to colors and canvases by the necessity of expressing himself, of realizing himself pictorially. This kind of primitive is still on the level of the child or the insane, in a pre-logical phase in which pure objective representation, almost without aesthetic content, is the only *raison d'être*, and the fulfillment of the artist's desire is the only thing that matters. A typical example of this sort of primitivism in Brazil is the well-known José Antonio da Silva, whose fame has already spread beyond our borders.

Cássio M'Boy belongs in a second category. He is a primitive, and it is important to say this whenever you call him an artist; but he is not one unconsciously, not even through a vital need to express himself. It is rather through choice, through discernment; because he sees in this kind of painting the artist's true language, which frees art of everything it has accumulated over the centuries, divesting it of the contingent, the transitory, the superfluous, the unnecessary. This type of primitivism, then, which is just like Rousseau's, is a return of art to its origins, with the specific function of speaking for a group.

Cássio M'Boy does not paint the way he does without knowing why. He made his choice of primitivism after more than thirty years' experience, through which, in contrast to what happens with most painters, he did not become intellectual, he did not acquire influences or reflect schools or fashions. Quite the opposite: he constantly strengthened himself, found an inspiration and a route that were entirely his own, seeking in his ingenuous art to record the aspirations of the people of the town where he lives, Embú, near São Paulo. His painting is a summary of Brazilian folklore, a synthesis of the process of social amalgamation that went on in this part of America; but seen and felt, not by an unconscious popular artist, as it might seem, but by a master of his craft.

The artist's life is directly related to his work, and to properly understand the latter we must be familiar with the former, we must analyze the personality of the man and of his environment.

Cássio M'Boy is a descendant of entirely opposite people. On his mother's side, he comes from the very old Camargo family, founders of the city of Amparo in São Paulo State. This line originated with the mysterious "Tiger," a pirate of colonial days who had founded the city of São Sebastião on the seacoast near São Vicente. On his father's side, in a diametrically opposite camp, he carries the blood of the Campos family, São Vicente colonial saddlers who, according to their oral tradition, are directly related to St. Francis de Sales.

His parents recounted that one of his ancestors, a noble lady of the court, was the first to reveal the adventurous spirit of "the Tiger" in her blood. Disobeying her father's wishes for her marriage, she fled with a humble trooper, swapping Rio de Janeiro for the São Paulo forest, where her husband founded cities and opened up farms. Later, generation after generation, all her descendants were attached to the soil, and they went on opening up more farms and founding more towns.

Cássio M'Boy was born in Tietê, São Paulo State. Of the ten children of the family, he was the one who was different—the boy who asked strange questions, who observed strange things, who secretly painted on the rough tables of the workers on his father's farm and made drawings that looked like cutwork towels.

Two things made a big impression on him as a child: paintings of saints, and the sight of the sun. Obsessed by them, he kept asking the same questions:

"Mother, where do the saints' pictures come from?

Who makes them?"

"Mother, what's over there where the sun comes up? Can we go there some day?"

Without thoroughly understanding this introspective boy, his mother always answered the same way:

"All paintings come from heaven, they are made by the saints."

"Beyond the sun lies civilization. Some day you can go there."

Then the boy delved further, relating and weighing the answers: "Where does the guitar music of the Negroes and the country people come from? Where do the tunes and songs come from? When are we going to civilization?"

"The guitar music, the tunes," his mother explained, "come from the sorcery of the Mother of the Waters," which meant, from the legends, from the womb of the earth, from the heartwood of the people.

One day he suffered his first great disillusionment. The principal image was stolen from the farm chapel. The thief had not been found out, but an old Italian farm hand also disappeared mysteriously. They looked for him for several days in vain. Then, to everyone's surprise, he reappeared, explaining that he had spent those days deep in the forest, and triumphantly exhibited a wooden image he had crudely carved to replace the stolen saint.

Little Cássio was shocked. He looked at the grotesque, poorly carved figure and grieved. So then, statues and paintings do not come from heaven? No. He had been rudely deceived. They had not told him the truth: prints

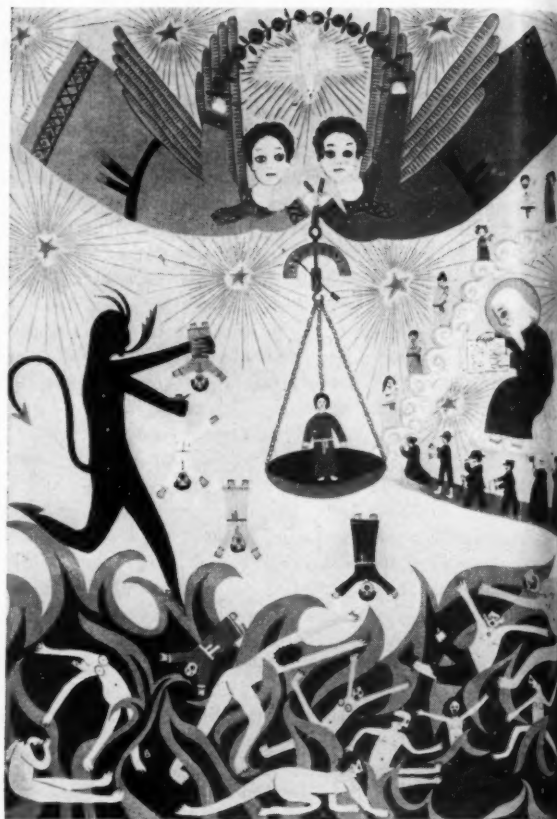


and paintings are made here on earth. He became indignant at this revelation, making his first discovery of reality by investigation.

Later a girl from Switzerland came to live on the farm. She was young, intelligent, educated, and beautiful. She drew a hunting scene for the boy in red ink on cross-hatched paper. Here was the confirmation of his suspicions. No, paintings did not come from heaven. The boy could no longer trust anything they told him. Then it was that he began to build his own world.

Years later, he saw a large oil portrait of the Bishop of Botucatu, who was a friend of his father's. It was a good likeness. The straight-on pupils of the eyes insistently followed the boy to every corner of the room. He received his primary education under religious influence. Then came his first rebellion. He wanted to be a priest. His father did not understand the uncertain world the boy sought, and left him free to make his own choice. Cassio then gave up the idea, and, at the age of thirteen, this descendant of "the Tiger" set out on adventures.

Our Lady and the Child Jesus



Judgment Day, 1951

He left home, got his first job. From then on, as the country people say, "the smoke of his chimney began to rise at his own expense."

The boy was already a man. But, even years later, he never ceased to be a child. At fifteen he decided to follow the sun and see what lay beyond. In São Paulo he continued to work. A German he met at his boarding house on Rua Aurora (perhaps the man was a war refugee; he later committed suicide) gave him his first lessons in drawing and anatomy. He began to paint advertising posters and to draw the human figure from life.

One day, when he was taking a drawing to be framed at an art shop, he came face to face with the academic teacher Pedro Alexandrino. This well-known painter emeritus picked up the drawing and chided the boy for treating its author so disparagingly, choosing one of the cheapest frames. He thought the quality of the work merited something better. Cassio laughed. Old Pedro Alexandrino was startled. Cassio told him he was the author of the drawing. The teacher was astonished and invited him to take free lessons at the School of Fine Arts. There he saw close at hand the celebrated artist's still lifes. He examined the perfect copper roofs, absolutely faithful to their models. He saw the well-arranged onions, the well-hung draperies, the carefully

measured light. He turned to the teacher and declared that he did not see beauty in an almost photographic copy of onions and roofs. He said that was cold, inhuman, impersonal. He even said it could not be art. The old teacher was annoyed. He berated the boy, considering him irreverent. Then Cássio had his second disillusionment: he began to doubt his aesthetic judgment. Perhaps he was wrong; perhaps he was crazy; perhaps that, not his simplistic conception, was true art.

With this new disenchantment the little town of Embú entered his life. He bought a small piece of land with the money he had and went into isolation. He attempted to return to the beginning, away from his family, devoting himself exclusively to cultivating the soil. Embú, more than a town, was a state of mind, a curious social phenomenon. Very near São Paulo, the big state capital, it had managed to stay apart from progress, from the effects of civilization, like a little island standing against the flood. In Embú, with its ancient convent dating from the time of the Jesuits and the foundation of São Paulo, all the customs and traditions of the true native spirit remained intact. Life in Embú became a sort of suicide for Cássio, where, in contact with the soil, he would forget his frustrating experiences and his dreams of being an artist.

But this voluntary exclusion of art did not last long, and it was in Embú, whose Indian name is M'Boy, that the real Cássio was born.

One day Tudinha Sanfona (Accordion Gertie), whose curious nickname came from her nasal twang, came and

Waterfall



Self-portrait

asked "the man from the city" to paint banners to be flown on masts for the festival of the patron saints. She assumed he could because, coming from civilization, from the place where the sun rises, he must "know how to do everything." Cássio himself had no doubts. He painted the cloths, taking great pains with the figures of the saints, expecting to please the devout old woman. He was very much let down: Tudinha Sanfona examined the banners with great curiosity and could not hide her disappointment. She turned to the artist and exclaimed sincerely: "Boy, I asked you for a painting, but you have made me a print!"

This was a great revelation to Cássio. He meditated on what she had said and came to understand what she meant.

A print was reality. A print was a copy. A print was the ordinary, common vision of the world. It was the photographic likeness of the object.

Painting was the opposite. Painting was imagination. It was the inner quality of the artist carried to the people. It was unreal color, it was flight, it was symbol, it was tradition, myth, dream, folklore. Painting was not something made in heaven, as they had taught him. Painting was the crude image slashed in wood by the old Italian farm hand. Painting was the soul, the heart of the people.



Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, 1940



Pollination, 1959



O Saci pictures small, black, one-legged devil who pesters travelers, in Brazilian folklore

That day saw the birth of Cássio M'Boy, who, now a full member of the group, was to become its interpreter, drawing his motifs from it, assimilating them, passing them through the filter of his educated vision, and returning everything in the form of happiness, beauty, and imagination.

Then he found the principles of his art: Painting is a language that is peculiar to each individual, but that must be understood by all men. And as such it must produce an aesthetic emotion of intense joy. Never did he employ a trace of sorrow, suffering, or disturbance in his works. That would displease his public. Painting must be life, like the sun. The artist produces for everyone, not for himself.

Thereupon he became the painter for a group of people, a maker of saints for processions, of images for the churches, of banners for religious festivals, creating a native art that absorbed the Indian and the white man, the Portuguese and the Jew, the African and the Turk, the universal and the individual. There was just one rule: he had to be himself, free of schools, fashions, or currents.

The solution could only have been his type of primitivism. His complicated atavistic heritage then showed itself: in his painting the adventurous blood of "the Tiger" mixed with that of St. Francis de Sales, the countryman mixed with the man who had lived some time beyond the sunrise, the environment acted on his past, and he found his world.

This process is responsible for all his subject matter.

It is the forest, with all its mysteries and its ghosts. It is the waterfall, symbolically represented by a woman enveloped in mythical flora and fauna, just as the countryman would imagine. It is *Judgment Day*, wherein God and the Devil weigh and examine mortals, classifying them and pronouncing the eternal destiny of their souls. It is *The Flight into Egypt* (with the same concept as Giotto's or Fra Angelico's) adapted to the Brazilian environment, with a tropical Christ child surrounded by butterflies and fish, and rosy angels (in the manner of Botticelli) peering out of a stratospheric blue sky. It is a *Christ When He Walked on Earth* fitting into the Brazilian land, as the backwoodsman would conceive Him. Galilee becomes the interior of the State of São Paulo. The Hebraic house turns into the cabin of an Italian farm hand on a São Paulo farm. The olive trees and the cedars are transformed into coffee trees and bits of the tropics. It is *Our Lady*, seen without perspective, like a Tartar ikon with Byzantine or Gothic detail, where angels hide among aureoles worthy of the mosaics of Ravenna or the Church of San Vitale in Rome, among brightly colored beads and banners of the feast of St. John. Or it is that legendary *Mother of Gold* of the Amazonian myths, hovering over a very native landscape, holding the disc of the sun in her hands and letting jewels fall to a confidently waiting humanity.

An important milestone in the evolution of Cássio's painting was the so-called Modern Art Week in 1922. With that Week, organized by a group of avant-garde artists and intellectuals, the bases were laid for the mod-



Christ When He Walked on Earth, 1956



The Flight into Egypt, 1959



The Bride, 1951

ernist movement in Brazil. Cássio M'Boy finally found answers to his questions: No, he wasn't crazy. He was not one man against everyone else, for he discovered, in that renovating movement, many others who thought as he did, who saw in art what he saw. Then he understood a great truth: to the artist, nothing is prohibited. The artist is absolutely free to express himself. Art, above all, is a license, a passport to the wonderful land of fantasy.

Enthusiastically he joined this artistic revolution, putting on an exhibition in combination with Flávio de Carvalho. But that artist was unconventional: he included nudes in the show, and the police interfered. The exhibition was closed and later reopened by court order. But all that did not matter. Cássio of Embú had found his path, though he continued to be unknown outside his own world.

In 1951 he decided to sell a small piece of property in Embú. A potential purchaser came along and saw his pictures, liked them, and wanted to buy some. This stranger was Professor Pietro M. Bardi, director of the São Paulo Museum of Art. Cássio was officially discovered. He had an exhibition at the Museum of Art and then another at the Museum of Modern Art; thoroughly recognized, he even exhibited in international shows in Tokyo, Paris, Venice.

Nevertheless, along this route of triumph and disillusionment, glory and disappointment, Cássio M'Boy remained the same, faithful to his origins and to his conception of the world. He is the consummate artist who

sees in his work not a personal product but just a sort of repayment of what he had assimilated and taken. A popular, autochthonous storyteller, a perpetuator of Brazilian tradition, seeking above all to preserve a society.

And that is why he remains isolated in Embú. His material seclusion symbolizes his artistic independence, which does not mean, however paradoxical it may seem, any excess individualism on his part.

Cássio M'Boy represents one of the purest lines of American painting, revealing in his subject matter all the oral tradition of our folklore. And that in itself would give him a solid position in the history of Brazilian painting. ☺





Students of Mexican Government's Primary Boarding Schools perform folk dances at annual festival. These are from Durango State

at home in school

SAMUEL KAPLAN

YOU ENTER the corridor of the block-long building on Calle Adolfo Prieto in Mexico City. Straight ahead you glimpse flower beds and trees. And as you emerge into the open your charmed eyes rest on the big colorful playground of Primary Boarding School No. 1.

In this school and in twenty-two others that dot the republic, the Government provides children of poor families between the ages of seven and fourteen not merely with the education available in conventional public schools but also with food, lodging, clothing, and medical services. And with something more. "Here," said María de la Luz Martínez Báez, the principal of Primary Boarding School No. 1, with a sweep of the arm that encompassed the block-square area of school building and playground, "these children from humble homes enjoy a healthful environment and wholesome recreation, develop pleasant social relations, and carry on a normal life." Her school has an enrollment of 530 girls, an average of just over thirty-five in each of its fifteen classes. There are two others in Mexico City, and the rest are scattered through fifteen states the length of the country. "Children are sensitive and impressionable, particularly our youngest girls, the first-graders," added Miss Martínez Báez. "So we strive to make the surroundings partake of the double character of school and home."

It was the 1910 Revolution that gave rise to these unique institutions. Finding on his hands the orphans of soldiers who had died in battle, Plutarco Elías Calles—then governor of Sonora State and later president of Mexico—decided in 1916 to open a boarding school for them. That was fine, thought General José Amarillas, but what about the sons of living soldiers who were in bad straits? Whereupon in 1924 he established a similar school for them, on the San Simón hacienda in Puebla State. As their value became more apparent they were taken over, and more of them opened, first by the Department of Technical Schools, then by the Ministry of Defense, and finally, in 1943, by the Ministry of Education. Today they are attended by nearly nine thousand children, the sons and daughters not only of soldiers but of farmers, workingmen, and other citizens of low economic status. All but six of the schools are coeducational.

Both at play and in the classroom, the vigor and animation displayed by the students of Primary Boarding School No. 1 speak volumes for the physical and mental regimen plotted for them by Professor Jesús Castro Agúndez, director general of the system, and his corps of technical assistants. The schools' present resounding success stems from policies laid down at the time they were transferred to the Ministry of Education. It was

emphasized that their duty was to provide an integrated education that would mold pupils into intelligent, responsible Mexican citizens and that this involved other aspects just as important as comprehensive primary schooling: an environment of decency and strict morality; diversions of a kind that would stimulate the children's imagination and enrich their cultural background; systematic physical exercise. In class, the teaching methods used mark a distinct advance over the former procedure of simply handing out textbooks to be memorized; for a botany lesson the teacher may lead the class out to the flower beds in the playground, there to examine and compare the structures and stages of growth of various plants, and other subjects are similarly handled to inspire the children to exert their mental powers to the utmost.

To enter a child in a Primary Boarding School, the parents apply to the offices of the director general of the system. A social worker checks on their moral character and financial capacity, and the prospective pupil must be pronounced sound in body and mind in a medical examination. "At first," said Miss Martínez Báez, "the new boarder may be homesick. But not for long, I assure you. With the kindly guidance of the teacher and the friendships that are quickly formed, she soon feels at home. So much so, in fact, that often it takes considerable urging to persuade a child to go back to her parents at vacation time."

In all the schools, the day begins with a rising bell at six in the morning. Setting-up exercises, which in the boys' schools take on a decidedly military aspect, follow at six-thirty. Then groups of children take turns in helping to sweep up the dormitories and clean the bathrooms, after which they join their companions on the playground until breakfast time at half past eight. The menu varies, as do those for lunch and supper, from day to day. Here is a sample breakfast: milk, corn flakes, *chilaquiles* (bits



Children learn trades so they can earn living if they do not go on to secondary school. Mexico City girl does fine embroidery. . . .



. . . Durango boy weeds school garden . . .

. . . Guerrero State boys fashion straw hats





Carpentry students at Jixtla (Guerrero State) school turn out good work without benefit of power tools



Fifty-meter race at annual inter-school sports event. Girls are encouraged to participate in athletics



Girls' orchestra plays traditional and popular Mexican airs

of tortilla fried in oil, then cooked in tomato sauce and sprinkled with cheese), rolls, fruit. Half an hour later, classes begin, to run—with a half-hour recess at eleven—till one. Then another hour for games. Lunch is from two to three; a typical lunch may consist of tapioca soup, steak, green salad, beans, tortillas, and fruit. Classes again, from three-thirty to six-thirty, are followed by supper—perhaps coffee with milk, beans, rolls, and cake. The children are back in the dormitories at seven-thirty and in bed by eight.

At the beginning of each term, the teacher calls on the class to select a committee of two for a chore that helps,

along with the regular medical and dental care, to keep her charges out of the infirmary. Their job? To assist her in her daily inspection of everybody's hands, mouth, and ears and to pass on the cleanness and neatness of clothes and desks. The inspected cannot resent this procedure, since they themselves chose the inspectors in a democratic election.

With the excellent shop training that the students receive in addition to their regular schooling, graduates who do not choose to go on to secondary school immediately qualify for jobs in their respective specialties. Depending on the equipment and facilities of the individual schools, the boys are given instruction in their choice of automobile or general mechanics, electrical work, plumbing, ironworking, carpentry and cabinetmaking, shoemaking, leatherworking, tailoring, house painting, bookbinding, barbering, toy-making, printing (composition or press-work), spinning and weaving, or baking. The girls can take their pick of pattern-making, cutting and sewing, dressmaking, hand and machine embroidery, fine mending, cooking, toy-making, candy-making, pastry-making, or beauty culture.

Though each Primary Boarding School is in effect a self-contained community, the children's need to learn more about the world around them is not neglected. Several times a month, as the opportunity offers, a group is taken on an excursion in the big school bus. In Guadalajara, the pupils of Primary Boarding School No. 4 may visit the state museum, which houses fine ancient and modern paintings; enjoy a play or a concert in the Degollado Theater; or picnic in Monk's Canyon, a picturesque gorge about five miles out of the city. The pupils of School No. 13, in Oaxaca, may take trips to ancient Monte Albán; to Mitla, sacred city of the dead; or to Benito Juárez Park, a lovely, semi-wild area. In Mexico City there are the art treasures in the Palace of Fine Arts; the zoo, the lake, and the wide stretches of Chapultepec Park; the athletic events in the huge stadium of the University City. And in varying degrees, according to what is available locally, the same stimulation is afforded pupils in the other eighteen Primary Boarding Schools.

Another way in which new vistas are opened is through correspondence with school children in other American countries. The embassies in Mexico City cooperate by supplying names and addresses and helping to make contacts. From time to time teachers from those countries vacationing in Mexico come to visit the classes that exchange letters with theirs. If this reaching of hands across thousands of miles does nothing more than make the children grasp the idea that all humanity is one, it has accomplished a useful purpose.

Coming as they do from among the lowest-paid families in the republic, the children—particularly the older ones—may already know the value of money. Nevertheless, the importance of thrift is impressed on all of them in a practical way. To the schools are sent Government savings stamps, which the children buy for twenty centavos and paste into folders safeguarded by the teacher. When a folder is filled, with fifty stamps, it is turned in

to the principal's office for a ten-peso (eighty-cent) National Savings Bond, which doubles in value if held for ten years. At vacation time, the parents pick up the bond.

The money to buy the stamps comes from various sources. At school the pupils each receive six pesos monthly as spending money. When they go home—on Saturdays, if the family lives in the same city or near by—they may be given small sums by relatives or friends. At the Industrial Production Fairs held at the end of the year—part of the National Sports and Culture Event in which all the Primary Boarding Schools participate—those whose handiwork is sold receive 20 per cent of the profit. The children also receive part of the proceeds of the sale of articles made in the shops (chairs, tables, shoes, leather briefcases, silver jewelry, toys, sweaters, children's clothes, embroidered tablecloths and doilies, shawls, and so on) and of the repair work they do for owners of cars and electrical equipment.

In order that parents should realize the many advantages their children enjoy, they are supposed, if financially able, to contribute six pesos a month. But sometimes, when the breadwinner is ill or out of work, he falls behind. So let it be inscribed where all good deeds are recorded that a good many offspring, instead of spending their earnings on modest pleasures, use them to liquidate their fathers' indebtedness.

Appreciative graduates show their gratitude in tangible ways. Forming themselves into associations, they hold meetings and work out schemes to raise money for parties and for things their schools need. Last year, with the proceeds of a bazaar they had staged on the school grounds, the alumnae of Primary Boarding School No. 1 bought a big, handsome cabinet in which are displayed scores of trophies won by pupils in competitions with other schools in the system.

These competitions reach a climax with the annual National Sports and Cultural Event. Started in 1943, the Events were originally intended to be only athletic meets, but the following year their scope was broadened. Nowadays, besides running, broad-jumping, discus-throwing, shot-putting, basketball (the one event from which girls are barred), softball, volleyball, and other such activities, they include choral singing; recitation; exhibitions of painting, drawing, and writing; specimens of printing; school newspapers. Between 1953 and 1958, the value



Dormitory of School No. 1, for girls, in Mexico City



School dining rooms provide three balanced meals a day

of the products entered in the Industrial Production Fairs totaled three hundred thousand pesos (twenty-four thousand dollars). But the largest crowds are drawn by the regional dances.

In the course of these contests, ten thousand young dancers have traveled all over the country. These peregrinations have given them the joyous opportunity to learn at first hand about customs, costumes, festivals, and rituals new to their experience, and have enabled their instructors to investigate and bring to light about 150 regional dances. Describing how charmingly a group from her school, complete with picturesque Yucatan costume, had performed the jubilant Jarana Yucateca at the 1958 Event, Miss Martínez Báez said apologetically: "Really, it brought tears to my eyes."

"The brilliant results more than justify the 22,682,372 pesos [\$1,815,000] spent on the system in 1958," in the opinion of Professor Castro Agúndez. He continued: "There are many other communities that would benefit economically and culturally from Primary Boarding Schools, and we plan to establish more. Surely it is only just to give children of worthy poor people educational and spiritual bread." ☪

Wholesome regimen keeps schools' dispensary business to a minimum

THEY MAKE ARGENTINA Laugh!

HUGO EZEQUIEL LEZAMA

VARIOUS European intellectuals who have visited Argentina briefly wrote afterward that we are a sad nation. Any generalization is risky. This one was downright perilous, since the twenty-odd million people who live in this sizable land represent highly dissimilar backgrounds—which makes for temperaments that are not only different but at times directly opposed.

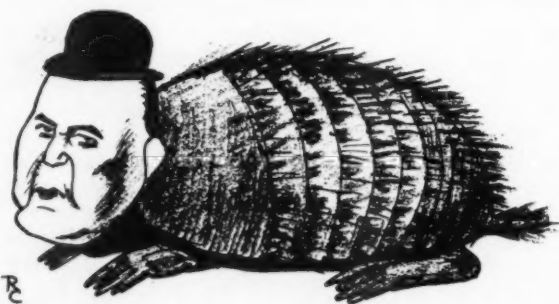
A map of Argentine folk music would show various emotional and psychological zones. The twin paths of joy and sadness down which humor makes its way are so clearly marked in the contrasting moods of this popular music that they may serve as an index to the Argentines' peculiar and sometimes-camouflaged sense of humor. In the Northeast, in the mountain region near Quebrada de Humahuaca, the people dance the gay and lively *carnavalitos*, but they also play the slow and doleful *huainos* on their *quena* flutes. The music of the pampa is decidedly mournful; at nightfall the nostalgia of the *vidalas* pours forth from the gauchos' guitars onto the rough plain. Finally, there is the tango of Buenos Aires with its general aura of despair and its frequently cynical lyrics. Yet despite all this apparent melancholia, Argentines do have a fine sense of humor,

perhaps because they are subjective as a group and timid as individuals. Evidenced in various ways, it is their most natural means of rebellion against authority and their most powerful confession of pessimism.

All through colonial times, when there was no journalism as we know it today, the people spread their humor by word of mouth, and they have continued to do so. In those days the epigrammatic couplet—a direct legacy from Spain—jolted the reputations of government officials and other notables. Its tone was cruel, its intention acid. About midway of the last century (by then a sort of journalism had been organized), the dailies waged aggressive political battles in humorous verses. But the first professional manifestation of humor was in a satirical weekly, *Don Quijote*, which violently assailed the surface appearances that cloaked the reality. Shortly after the turn of this century, the magazine *Caras y Caretas* brought together the leading humorous cartoonists and won public acclaim that was unprecedented in Argentina.

During the difficult years when Argentine democratic institutions were being organized and established the people lived under tremendous political tension. They found an emotional outlet in creating and applauding caricatures and cartoons. This was their compensation and at times their revenge. And many years were to pass before Argentine humor broke the bonds of political servitude and achieved the balance of subject matter that marks all mature humor. This happened when a cartoonist came up with a new element: tenderness. His name, which fast became known all over the country, was Lino Palacio.

Children are a natural subject of the most genuine humor. They are Lino Palacio's favorite characters—by their presence, as in the delightful covers he has drawn for the weekly magazine *Billiken* for many years,

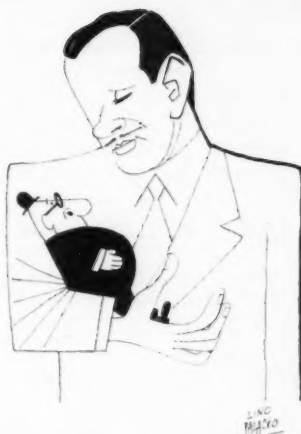


Old caricature of Hipólito Yrigoyen, twice President of Argentina (1916-22, 28-30). Epithet was "el Peludo [the Hairy One]"

or by their absence, as in the case of his widely known "Don Fulgencio, the man who had no childhood."

Lino Palacio graduated as an architect from the University of Buenos Aires, but little by little he gave himself over to the vocation he cared for most: drawing. He taught this art in colleges and secondary schools, then later founded an advertising agency, which, because of the prestige of his name and his profound understanding of people, became one of Argentina's biggest. But all these side interests, though he works hard at them, remain just that, side interests. He is first and foremost the gentle humorist, the creator of Don Fulgencio. His drawing is conventional but skillful, and plainly shows his personal touch. Through it we constantly feel his cordiality toward mankind and his deep affection for children. The pranks, the illogicality, the poetic caution of all children are reflected in "his children." He is an accomplice who gives voice to childish wonder at the tedious world of grown-ups.

Palacio's studio is in the heart of the business and financial district of Buenos Aires, just off Calle Florida.



Self-caricature of Palacio with favorite "brain child," Don Fulgencio, drawn especially for AMÉRICAS

In a large ninth-floor room, furnished with comfortable armchairs and lined with shelves crammed full of books and magazines from all over the world, he spends most of every day. He sets up his drawing board and goes about creating situations and characters, all the while chatting with friends who happen to drop in. Near by, people do business, play the stock market, close important transactions, crush ambitions, bolster egos, bog down in the noise of traffic, newsboys, and innumerable bars. Palacio contrives to create an island of peace and to listen to the human heartbeat, with which he subtly endows his most lovable characters. Take, for example, Avivato, the shrewd *porteño*, quick to take advantage, who ends every rascally venture with an apologetic wink. Or Doña Tremebunda (Doña Dreadful), the irascible housewife, or Ramona, the Galician servant. They all emerge from Palacio's pencil to provoke a smile, never to hurt.

I put my questions to him as he worked on another *Billiken* cover, and he answered naturally and effortlessly, without missing a stroke.

"How did you decide to be a humorist?" I asked.

"I didn't decide," he replied. "I don't know why I am, or even if I am."

"Who is your favorite humorist?"

"Steinberg."

"How would you define humor?"

"I suppose it's a justified reaction against solemnity."

"What interests you most, aside from your work?"



Lino Palacio at work in his studio in heart of Buenos Aires

DON FULGENCIO (el hombre que no tuvo infancia)



Don Fulgencio, the man who had no childhood: Doll Hospital—"I'd like him to talk."—"We'll put in a little thing so he can say mamma."—"No! Make him say papa."

"Seventeenth-century porcelains, music boxes, and Sophia Loren."

"What's your favorite animal?"

"Look, a humorist would say the duck-billed platypus, just to get a laugh. My answer"—he looked up and smiled—"is the horse, because that's the one I really like best."

"Do you think our times are really worse than others?"

"Every age is the worst."

"What person in history would you like to have been?"

"Henry VIII, so I could eat chicken with my fingers."

"Do you think that humor is dependent on man's freedom?"

"Not at all. The best political jokes have come out of dictatorships."

Lino Palacio—sportsman, possessor of one of the finest collections of porcelains in Argentina, winner of countless national and international prizes—went on drawing his marvelous children who dance across the heartstrings of the people.

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Nowhere in the Civil Register of Argentina is the birth of one Chamico recorded. Possibly because Chamico does not exist. And since he had no earthly form, there was nothing for him to do but find a man whose body he could occupy. He chose the poet Conrado Nalé Roxlo, one of the most outstanding writers in Argentina. So let's get on with the biography of Chamico's alter ego. Nalé Roxlo was born in Buenos Aires in 1898. When he was twenty-five, he published his first book of poems, *El Grillo* (The Cricket), which immediately gave him a name in Argentine literature. His stature has been confirmed by numerous other books and several plays, among them *Una Viuda Difícil* (A Difficult Widow), which may be staged in New York in a translation by Ruth Gillespie.

For many years he has also been writing humorous stories; some of them he has also illustrated. These were the work of Chamico, who quickly gained widespread popularity in newspapers and magazines and



Chamico the humorist and Nalé Roxlo the poet are one and same. Chamico did caricature of Nalé Roxlo for AMÉRICAS

finally published several books: *Cuentos de Chamico* (Chamico's Stories), *El Muerto Profesional* (The Professional Corpse), *Cuentos de Cabecera* (Bedtime Stories), *La Medicina Vista de Rejo* (A Sidewise Look at Medicine), *Mi Pueblo* (My Town), *Libro de Quejas* (Book of Complaints), *El Humor de los Humores*, and *Sumarios Policiales*.

Chamico is a unique humorist. He was born before his time, at a moment when Argentine humor had not quite reached maturity. In precise, forceful language he makes a mockery of grotesque situations, exploiting the ridiculousness of the less-important human attitudes. He calls the traditional Argentine *asado* (beef roasted in animal hide) "leather-bound meat." With his character Italia Migliavacca he captures the humor of topics that are commonplace to teachers. But Chamico does not hurt anyone, not even the objects of his jokes.

Whether you call him Chamico or Nalé Roxlo, he is one of the few Argentine writers who make a living from writing. There are two reasons for this: first, his (or their) books sell very well; and, second, he has waged a never-ending battle to teach people to respect the writing profession and to pay for cultural things as naturally as they would for a ticket to the races. There is no getting around him on this, and he has a fund of anecdotes to prove it. One concerns a Buenos Aires mayor who had just returned from an official visit to Rio de Janeiro, where he had been treated royally. Deciding therefore to present the city of Rio with a collection of works by Argentine writers, he sent Nalé Roxlo a letter in which he outlined his plan "to repay the attentions received" and asked him to contribute copies of his books. Obviously, the city government was not too poor to afford such an inexpensive gesture, but Nalé Roxlo, in his reply, did not go into this. Instead, he wrote: "Some friends of mine frequently invite me to their country estate. When I go there, they shower me with kindness and I thoroughly enjoy taking long walks through the grounds. Now you want to do something nice for the city fathers of Rio and I would like to do something nice for this family, and our reason is the same. So I propose that I will donate my books if you will send me several park benches for their garden. How does this strike you?" There was no reply.

Difficult though it is to interview such a non-material being, I put my questions to Chamico.

"What is your briefest definition of humor?"

"I don't have the briefest. I'll give you one of normal size, only partial, like any definition of the indefinable. Among a thousand other things, humor consists in kicking someone so courteously that he is happy about it, since he thinks it was the next fellow who got kicked."

"Who is your favorite humorist?"

"My teacher Charles Dickens. No one has ever equaled him in showing us the weakness of men without making us stop loving them. After reading his books—if one is lucid enough to accept his mirror—we are more humble, but not humiliated. His love saves us from his laughter."

"What person in history would you like to have been?"

"Old Gutenberg. I would have printed only my books

and been the most-read author of all time."

"What do you think is the most important happening of this century?"

"The invention of the radio. It's marvelous! If you handle it skillfully and intelligently—that is to say, turn a simple button to the left—you can produce a silence as propitious to meditation, reading, or creative conversation as the fertile silences of the Age of Pericles or the Golden Age. By taking full advantage of those silences, man could find the great truths and the great fantasies that he needs so badly."

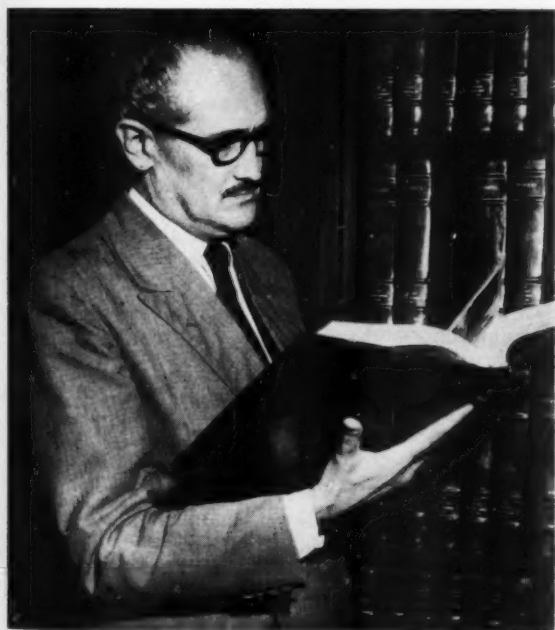
"Do the humorist and the poet live within you without conflict?"

"Very comfortably, and they are mutually helpful to each other. The conflict is external. Many people don't understand such duality and look at me as if I were a rare beast, as they look at the two-headed man in the circus, not realizing that what they take for a phenomenon is simply a better-developed human being."

Surrounded by many books and some toys that his grandson had left scattered on the floor, Nalé Roxlo—or Chamico—stood by the window on a sunny afternoon that bounced off the pavement of Avenida Rivadavia.



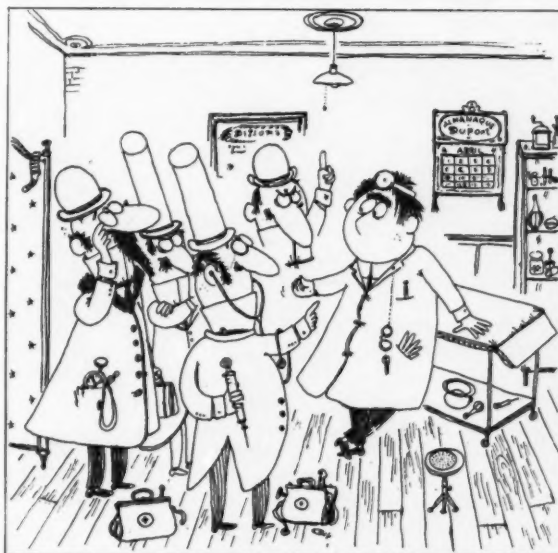
Carlos Warnes is a fifty-four-year-old *porteño*, tall, gray-haired, of sober mien. Only his dancing eyes give a hint of the humorist within. Besides being excellent in his field, Warnes represents a historic episode in Argentine humor, for his style joins the old with the so-called "new humor." The Argentine man in the street might possibly not know Carlos Warnes, but ask about César Bruto and no one would fail to smile and speak of him as



Carlos Warnes, creator of popular character César Bruto, has large bound collection of telephone books "for bedtime reading"

an old and amusing friend. César Bruto is one of Carlos Warnes' characters.

When the history of Argentine humor is written, Warnes will have a long chapter, because he has graphically shaped a way of life, a mentality, and an echo of the soul of the people. He does not draw, he writes. Oski, one of the most individualistic and intelligent of the new group of cartoonists, gave César Bruto form—and his appearance matches his wild reactions perfectly. It is practically impossible to describe the nature of this character who embodies the absurdity, logic, and thought



César Bruto (right), whose words come from Warnes' pen, is drawn by Oski. A delightfully unrefined rustic type, he ventures boldly into any field

of a rustic mind, delightfully unrefined, quite typical of rural Argentina. Among other devices, Warnes uses an utterly chaotic system of spelling that expresses to the fullest a typical manner of speech. Bruto is neither a satirical character nor a caricature, but a recognizable person, acceptable and entertaining.

Warnes is not known only for César Bruto. He has written under the pseudonym Uno Cualquiera (Anyone Whatsoever). As Napoleón Verdadero (Real Napoleon) he put out a marvelously clever and witty series in which he recounted the fortunes of the Jaramacos kings in the country of Lío Traslío (Mess Aftermess). His conception and execution link him with the best of the Spanish writers of picaresque works.

This man has been many things, from night watchman at the National Historical Museum to director of leading Buenos Aires magazines like *El Hogar* and *Mundo Argentino*. Well known in professional Argentine journalistic circles, he is now secretary of the daily *Crítica* and of the magazine *Aquí Está*. Not only has his career been brilliant but he is regarded with deep and genuine affection by his co-workers.

I interviewed him in his library, where I found him

re-reading his bedtime books: telephone directories. (He has an extensive, carefully bound collection, and says he is fascinated by the abundance of heroes.)

"How was César Bruto born?"

"I don't know, for when I met him he was already grown."

"What is your definition of humor?"

"A ghostlet that frightens only fools."

"What would you like to have been if you were not what you are?"

"Anything. I'd have been content all the same."

"What do you consider the most important event of our century?"

"Have there been any important events in this century?"

"Who is your favorite humorist?"

"God."

"Do you manage to live off your humor?"

"Off my humor, very badly; with my humor, very well."

"How did you get your start as a professional humorist?"

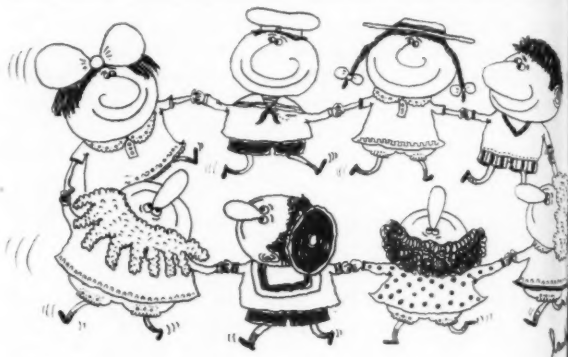
"In nineteen-thirty-something I published some stories. Chamico reviewed them extensively and most favorably in the daily *El Mundo*. The title of the article was 'A New Humorist.' So it was Chamico's prestige that gave me my real start. I immediately began to write for various newspapers and magazines. I still have a very warm memory of Chamico's generosity."

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A few years ago—within the past decade—a page of cartoons signed by Landrú appeared in the magazine *Vea y Lea*. The drawing, shaky and a bit grotesque, suggested a child's work, but it was remarkably expressive. The humor was cold, fascinating, intelligent. In



Left: "Portrait of Tia Vicenta." Below: "Children Dancing"



Landrú did these drawings especially for AMÉRICAS

one panel an elderly woman was peering through a lorgnette into a mirror. At her side stood a maid. The reflection showed a child with a balloon. The woman was saying: "María, the mirror is slow again." Another showed two women commenting on a third who was walking head down: "Yes, she's 99, but she walks that way so she'll look 66."

The appearance of Landrú marked the real beginning of the revitalizing "new humor" in Argentina (it had already taken shape in Spain in the magazine *La Codorniz*, under the aegis of Miguel Mihura and Álvaro de la Iglesia), although he was not the first. Oski was, but he lacked the ability to write and to invent characters.

Landrú came into being after Juan Carlos Colombres, but the two are a single person. Colombres, a thirty-six-year-old native of Buenos Aires, has two children and one wife. He signed his first cartoons J. C. Colombres, but then his brother, a rather well-known painter who signs himself I. C. Colombres, asked him to change his name so that they would not be confused. So he took the pseudonym Landrú, partly because of his physical likeness to the famous criminal. What happened later? "Now my brother tells everybody, 'I'm Landrú's brother.'"

I talked with Landrú in the offices of the magazine *Tia Vicenta*, which he founded in 1957.



Landrú (real name: Juan Carlos Colombres), leader of "new-humor" movement in Argentina, founded *Tia Vicenta* magazine in 1957

"Could you give me your definition of humor?"

"Yes."

"Which are your favorite humorists?"

"Giovanni Mosca and Miguel Mihura."

"What person in history would you like to have been?"

"Adam."

"How did you get your start as a humorist?"

"Well, I've been drawing since I was a child. When I was in the third year of high school, I wrote a book called *Génesis Novísimo*, in which I recounted that the first inhabitant on earth had been Borié, who had an invisible body and a material soul. His soul was a chocolate bar. Borié ate his soul and his body became visible. He later married a tree."

As a contribution to the progress of Argentine humor, Landrú's founding of *Tía Vicenta* is comparable in significance only to the appearance of César Bruto. This magazine brings together a group of humorists who in one way or another exemplify intellectual humor that grows from the logic of absurdity. The magazine's predominantly political nature—which is, incidentally, nonpartisan—gives it an audience even among people who had not previously appreciated this different sort of humor. *Tía Vicenta* has become almost a national event, and its circulation has reached heretofore unheard-of numbers. Even the most solemn political figures are glad to be mentioned in its pages. *Tía Vicenta* could probably make or break a candidate, with humor as its only device. Its name often comes up in debates in Congress and in the foreign press.

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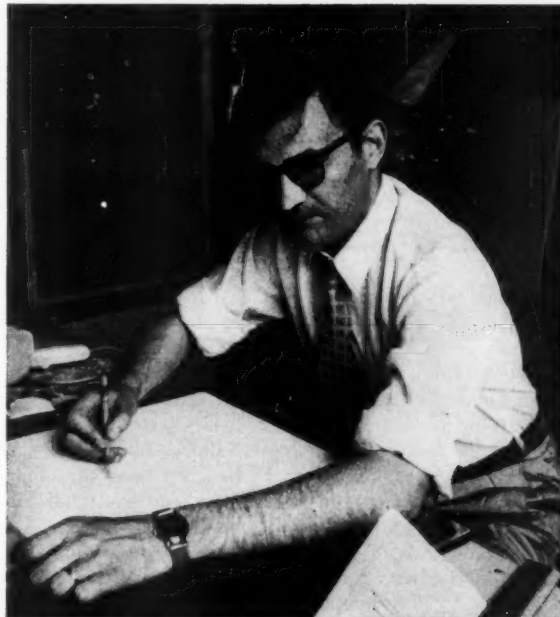
Contributors to *Tía Vicenta* form the nucleus of the vanguard of Argentine humor. Almost none of the traditional humorists—with the exception of César Bruto, who is the movie critic—appear in its pages. One of the most



"Mailman!"—Drawn especially for AMÉRICAS

popular characters in this magazine is Landrú's creation Jacinto W., an old man given to noisy mirth and to eating royal jelly and shellfish. (His success has reached the point where an orchestra called Jacinto W. y Sus Tururú Serenaders has been formed, and one of its records sold fifteen thousand copies in just a few days.) Other contributors are Pericles, Basurto, Jordán de la Cazuella, Faruk, and Manucho—all outstanding for the exceptional intelligence of their humor.

Faruk is a television star as well, and Argentines can watch him drawing cartoons almost every day. Actually, Faruk is the pseudonym that Jorge Palacio, Lino Palacio's son, adopted in 1952. His favorite theme is current



Faruk, Lino Palacio's son Jorge, is political cartoonist who draws for both papers and TV audiences

politics, and he has a singular talent for finding amusing situations and contradictions in the national life. In his definition, humor is something that finds a smile in the simplest, most commonplace things. When I asked which person in history he would like to have been, he said, "No one, because I'd be dead." As for the greatest event in our century, he wanted to answer that question on December 31, 1999.

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Now this by no means covers Argentine humor. For example, I have left out Florencio Escardó, a well-known pediatrician and now vice rector of the National University of Buenos Aires. He is the famous Piolín de Macramé. And Luis Medrano, who televises his "grafodramas" from the newspaper *La Nación*; and Dobal, the political cartoonist of the daily *Clarín*; and so many others. It is proof enough, however, of how wrong those Europeans were when they called Argentina a sad nation. ☺

THERE HE WAS, standing in the sun, with a package in his right hand and a potted azalea under his left arm. He was practically hugging it, with all the tenderness one bestows on what one really loves.

He had been there in the sun since just after eleven in the morning. Now it was three, and the heat was becoming unbearable. He had tried taking refuge in the board structure they call a station; but actually the atmosphere inside was even heavier and the air was boiling.

They had told him that perhaps there would be a train in the afternoon; along toward evening, they had said. No one knew for certain. The stationmaster, a man in a blue cap and twill jacket, had barely interrupted his conversation with other loafers to answer that he wasn't sure, but it was possible a train might stop there that afternoon. They would let him know.

Amador, for such was the name of the man with the package and the azalea, was going to the port to see his son. He was taking the plant as a present. For years he had cared for it lovingly, watching the seed change into this little flowering tree that was now trembling under his arm.

No one can imagine how much care an azalea needs, especially in these climes where the sun burns and scorches green things.

Amador knew very well. A plant needs to grow among other plants, just as a man does not mature alone; therefore, in the beginning he had given this azalea a protected place in the center of the garden. But as soon as he was sure that its roots were firm he had neglected the other plants, had let them die in the heat and given all his attention to his azalea.

Day after day, or, better, morning after morning, for he would rise with the sun and run to see the plant, it had brought him compensations: a suspicion of green attached to the main stalk that later became a leaf, and then progressed from leaf to branch; or the way the whole plant had straightened up as the roots had penetrated that always-soft, always-moist soil, which he had kept that way, just right for the seed to flourish too, like an upside-down tree; or the expectancy, a mixture of fear and happiness, when he had seen that grayish button appear, which might have been a blight but which had finally burst open, revealing in the center a different brush stroke, the first flower. All this had repaid his vigils, his care, his fears, and the obsession that comes with giving oneself to a job or a person or a plant.

How many years had this gone on? It was hard to say. It had begun when his son had left for the port and he had remained alone, a widower, taking care of the convent garden, the only garden in that desert, where the son, also named Amador, used to work beside him. That was when he had decided to plant an azalea and make it grow. One of the nuns had told him it was impossible, that azaleas did not grow in this area, that his efforts would be in vain. But he had insisted. He had ordered the seed, prepared the soil, and planted it. He did not mind work, and in his inmost heart he believed in what

THE Azalea

seemed hopeless. Hadn't they told him when his son was born that he would not live? The mother had died in childbirth, and that marks a child, they had told him. Such children bear death on their flanks, like the brand marks on the rumps of cattle. But he had refused to believe it. He had given the boy his own name in baptism and had taken care that he should grow. And so the child had done. Nothing about him made one think of death, unless it was the longing to leave that he had had from early childhood. He had wanted to abandon this desert, where everything was the same color, and travel to the sea, which was like a gateway. Perhaps that, Amador the father said to himself, may have something to do with what they predicted, perhaps the temptation to leave, and to leave for good, might just mean to go in search of death.

One day, as the boy had wanted, he had gone. At the last moment he had turned to his father and promised he would return. But Amador, looking him in the eye, had known he would not keep that promise. From now on, he had told himself, I shall have to live alone. It was then that he had decided to grow an azalea.

How long ago had that been? Undoubtedly many years. So many things had happened since then. The letters from Amador, once a month at first, and then further and further apart. Those letters that one of the nuns read to him, the same one who had taught his son to write but had never been able to teach him because he was already too old. And then the letters had stopped coming altogether, and there had been nothing left for him but the azalea. When did all that happen? Around the same time, or perhaps a little later, the congregation had left. The convent was converted into a public school and they no longer wanted to have a garden. Amador had had to go to live on the other side of town in a shack he built. How long did all that go on? For someone who glides through life like a river in its course, time has

no great meaning. There are events, yes; but the dates become confused. So that if he tries to arrange what has happened in order, he does not succeed.

Everything was unclear up to that certain moment—he did remember that one—when they had told him that a letter had come for him. Barely a week ago. The scene was perfectly engraved on his mind: he was standing proudly beside the azalea, and his right hand, or rather the index finger and thumb of his right hand, was about to pull out a weed that had dared to grow alongside the plant, when he heard the voice of Rosaura, Pedro's daughter, shouting to him from a distance that a letter had arrived. Then, like a bubble, something had risen from deep within him, from an area he had believed forgotten, and had emerged, very gently, as a name: Amador.

It was a letter from his son. Miss Elvira, the school-teacher, had had to read it to him, and she had done so with that whistling pronunciation that was so hard for him to understand. In it his son told him that he had returned from a long voyage, that he had seen the world (the world! thought Amador) and that he wanted to see him. He was in the port, would be there for a while, and was sending him money for the fare.

Miss Elvira had carefully folded the letter and handed it back to him. She looked at him with rather a disdainful air, and then turned toward the mirror, as if to imply that the interview was over. And at that instant Amador had decided: the azalea would be for his son. Now he understood. That was the reason he had cared for it so well. He wanted to give it to his son.

And so it was that he was there this day, standing in the sun with the package and the plant, waiting for a train that perhaps would not come, and feeling his ears ringing with the heat.

By now the sun should have been moving toward the west; but no, it stayed like a gray spot in the center of the sky. And the temperature was rising by the second. Amador did not know what to do. He looked at the azalea again, and now his heart did skip a beat, stopped in his chest and lay there as dead as a stone: one of the leaves was completely burnt; even more, one whole side of the plant, the side facing the sun, seemed scorched, as if a flame had just passed lightly over it.

Oh, God, is it possible? Amador's patience vanished. He ran this way and that. He went to the building. Somewhere he had to find shade. But the sun had invaded everything. He told himself he had to act quickly. He must find water and moisten the soil, which had become clayey and the color of a lion's fur. He approached the stationmaster, who was still chatting with his friends in the sun, as if it were not even hot. He asked him:

"Would you be so kind—"

"They've just notified us the train won't be coming."

"Would you be so kind—"

"Didn't you hear me? There's no train."

"No. That's not what I wanted."

The conversation stopped for a few seconds. Everyone looked at him. One nibbled on a matchstick, another scratched his head, and a third cleaned his fingernails

with a large penknife. The stationmaster pushed his cap back and asked: "Then what do you want?"

"Would it be possible," Amador inquired, "to find a little water?"

"Water," said the man who was cleaning his fingernails, looking up, "is the hardest thing to find in this place, my friend."

"Water," echoed a man almost as old as he and much smaller, whom he had not noticed before. The five men stared at him and, without knowing why, Amador felt embarrassed with his tied package and his plant.

"Water is very scarce. But if you'd like a drink of wine—" The one with the matchstick between his teeth held out a dark bottle.

"No. Thanks very much. I want water. You don't know where I could find it?"

"Go and see if they'll give you some in the village."

"I doubt it," the stationmaster interrupted, "but try if you like."

"Many thanks," said Amador, and he said goodbye to the only one who had not spoken to him, the one who was scratching himself unhurriedly, as if performing a job.

Over there, not very far away, but made distant by the mist that blurred its outlines, you could make out the village. There was no real road between the town and the station, only a track traced in the sand by the feet of those who had walked to the railroad or returned to their houses. Amador followed it without looking where he stepped, for all his attention was concentrated on the azalea. The petals of the flowers had lost their stiffness, that living something that had made you think, seeing them barely stuck to the branches, they were about to take flight at any moment. And Amador felt a stab of pain, for this was his plant and he was taking it as a gift to his son.

He stumbled and almost fell. He was floundering between the sand-colored sky and the sky-colored sand, like a scarecrow that had suddenly come to life. And he did not want to fall. He dropped the package and clung to the plant, embracing it as if it were a child, and finally collapsed on his knees, holding it fast on his head. He had saved it.

He got up. He was very tired now, and decided to leave the package there. Later, the next day, when he went back to the station, he would pick it up. And if someone should steal it in the meantime? No matter, he was very tired. Then he went on walking, and each step cost him an effort. His legs hurt, especially the left one. He saw that a little thread of blood had traced a red mark on his shoe. He pulled up his trouser leg and discovered a wound near his knee—not very large, but bleeding uninterruptedly.

He remembered that he had a rag in his pocket, and made a bandage of it. But then he saw a spot appear on the cloth and grow like an animal expanding in water. No matter. He had no time. He was terribly tired and had to reach the village. He took up the azalea again and went on.

Stopping in front of the first house, he knocked and waited. There was no answer. He knocked again and,

after a few moments, pushed on the door. It opened easily and Amador found himself facing the desert. It was an abandoned house, with just one wall and one door that opened on the same desert that surrounded him.

Then he went on again and slowly came into the village's only street. But now he did not dare to knock. He was afraid of finding himself face to face with the desert again. Perhaps it had devoured all the houses, and nothing remained but the façades, the closed windows, the doors that open on a landscape of sand.

And when he finally came to a little square, he found only a bench in the sun and three trunks that must once have been trees but now cast no shadow. Amador stopped near them, looked at his plant, and noticed that another of the branches had been scorched. Oh, God, my God. He looked up to the sky and the sun blinded him. I must do something, God, I cannot let it die here in my arms.

Suddenly he saw a pair of eyes appear at a crack in a shutter. They shone between the boards, they were spying on him. Amador ran across the street. He stopped in front of that gaze and exclaimed: "Please——"

But the eyes immediately disappeared.

By now the azalea was bending over. It looked as if it had been beheaded. The leaves hung down, withered, and enveloped the branches like a veritable shroud. It cannot be, Amador thought. All this is so much, so much, so much time, so many things, my whole self. And something surged within him, a rebellion unknown to him, and he began to shout in the street: "Please! Please! Please!"

Several windows opened, several doors too. He saw the women who had been spying on him. They stood on their doorsteps like phantoms created by the heat.

"Please——"

"What's the matter with you?" one of the women asked, approaching.

"Madam, could you give me a little water? This plant is dying, and I am taking it to my son as a gift. It's a plant——"

"We don't even have water to drink. What made you think we would give you water for a plant?"

Someone laughed, not very loudly, and the laughter ran along the street and lost itself in the desert, over there where he had come in. The woman moved away, went back into her house, and shut the door. The other followed suit. And in a few moments he was alone. Now dismay did overwhelm him. He felt that the azalea had died, and that he was holding in his hands the cadaver of something he loved. That he had loved? Very much. He did not know where to turn. He took a step to the right, another to the left, wandered like a blind man who could not find a wall to guide him. And suddenly he was by the bench and collapsed on it, in the sun, clinging to what remained of his plant, sick, much older than he had been in the morning, and he felt that he too was beginning to be scorched by the flame of the sun.

Two or three hours later, the sun had barely moved. There was someone beside him. He opened his eyes, and at first he saw only a great brightness that flooded

everything. But then in the midst of that blindness he made out the silhouette of a person, and little by little it took on the shape of a girl, not very tall, dark, with straggling hair.

"Sir——"

"Yes?"

"Don't stay here. It may be bad for you. Come along."

"Where?"

"I know a place. It's in the shade."

It seemed to be a chapel, or the remains of a chapel. A bit of wall and a bit of belltower with a cord hanging from it, but no bell. In its place you could now see the sky. And at the foot of the wall there was a spot of shade, just enough to shelter you if you squatted, doubled up as he had been told you are before you are born.

"Come on, hurry up, so they won't see us."

And the girl took him by the hand and tried to pull him along. Her touch gave him courage. He looked at her. She had the big, gentle eyes of those who, like him as he was before, have not known anguish. He felt comforted and thought that perhaps that dead thing he was dragging in his arms might be born again.

"Sit down," the girl told him. "You'll be better off here."

"Thanks," he repeated.

"Now I am going to try to get you what you want."

"What?"

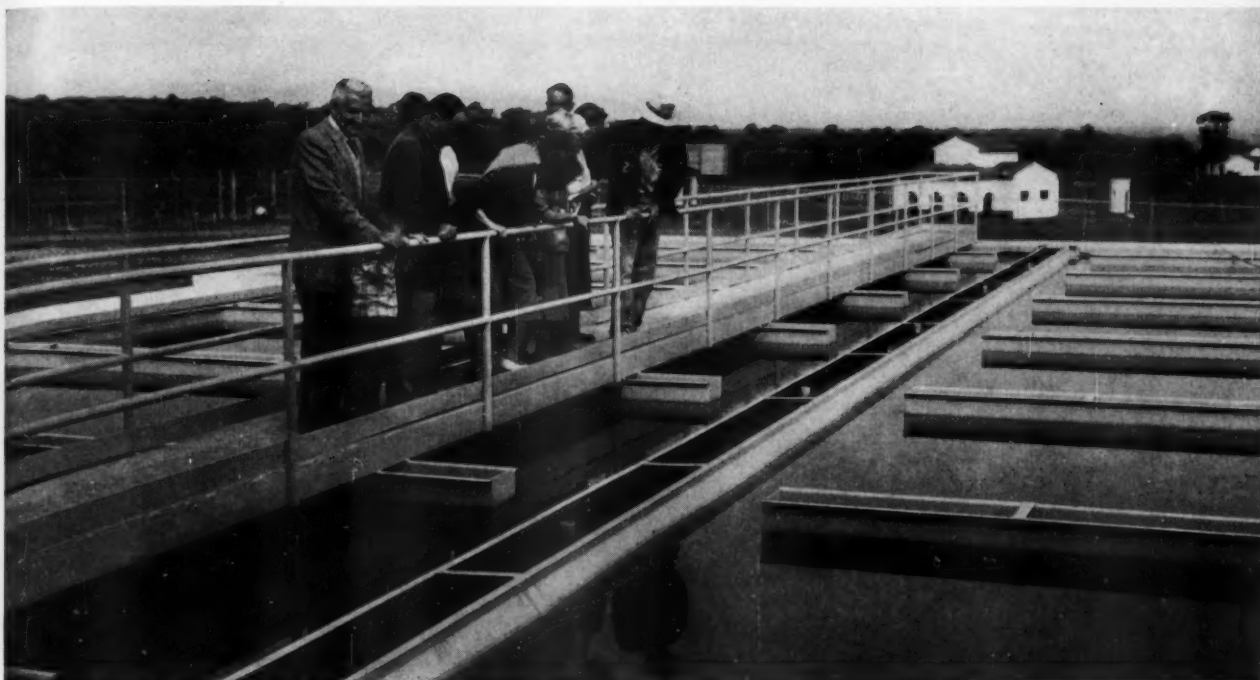
"A little water for the plant. Stay here, wait for me, I'll be right back."

He opened his mouth to answer; but a tremendous sob rose from the deepest part of him and prevented him from speaking, as if some knot inside him had been untied. He felt himself flooded with something warm that could only be tenderness, and this something spread through his veins, ran through him like a tide, and suddenly he realized that he was in the shade, in a shady place, and that the girl who was going away, whose name he did not even know, was the one who had brought him here.

He began to cry. Without desperation, without sobs. Slowly the tears glided down his cheeks and fell into the flowerpot. He cried a great deal, like a spring that has suddenly found an outlet, and all those tears that came from something he had been keeping for a long time moistened the azalea's soil. It became porous, regained its dark color, the color of fertile land. You could say that one by one those tears were reaching the very roots of the plant. Never before had Amador felt in such close communication with anything, not even when he had sired his son. Because of this, he felt memories flow into him, faces that were important, events, the convent, his wife, and finally a name that was his own but that to him was his son's. And with that name on his lips, as if he were calling himself, he closed his eyes, let his life slip away like a river, and knew he had reached the sea.

When the girl returned, she saw the old man holding a different plant. A tree, all covered with flowers, that trembled in his arms, unlike any she had ever seen before. And since she thought the man was sleeping, she did not venture to wake him. ☪

PARAGUAY



Water-treatment plant is part of Asunción's new city water system, first in its history

TODAY

ABDÓN P. ÁLVAREZ

WHAT'S new in Paraguay?

To begin with, there's the road between Asunción, the capital, and the Brazilian border; and—to choose a few of the most important advances of the past few years—there are the trans-Chaco route, the installation of a city water system, the airport, and a modern hotel. True though it may be that material things are not in themselves a good barometer for measuring a country's well-being, they do indicate its degree of progress. These five will be of incalculable benefit to future development.

The ancient villages along the new road to Brazil have not yet recovered from their surprise at the swift motor vehicles that are now dashing by, making the strange noises of civilization, disturbing the peace that for centuries the local people had enjoyed in their intimate contact with nature. It looks as if the modest wagon drawn by noble oxen were about to be relegated to oblivion, or at least to the background, after hundreds of pioneer years during which it was the only means of transport that could overcome weather and terrain.

The two-hundred-mile road (which will form part of the Pan American Highway) runs clear across the country from west to east, linking Asunción with the border town of Puerto Presidente Stroessner. The region through which it passes is one of the most beautiful in

Maté tea, drunk in traditional way, is favorite refreshment





Bridge over Paraná River at Puerto Stroessner will carry highway running from Asunción to Brazil, open new trade route



Three concurrent stages of transportation are typified in front of new hospital building of National Social Security Agency

Raft of logs on Paraná River. Many float on downstream for sale in Argentina



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Asunción waterfront. Paraná River has been country's main link to outside world

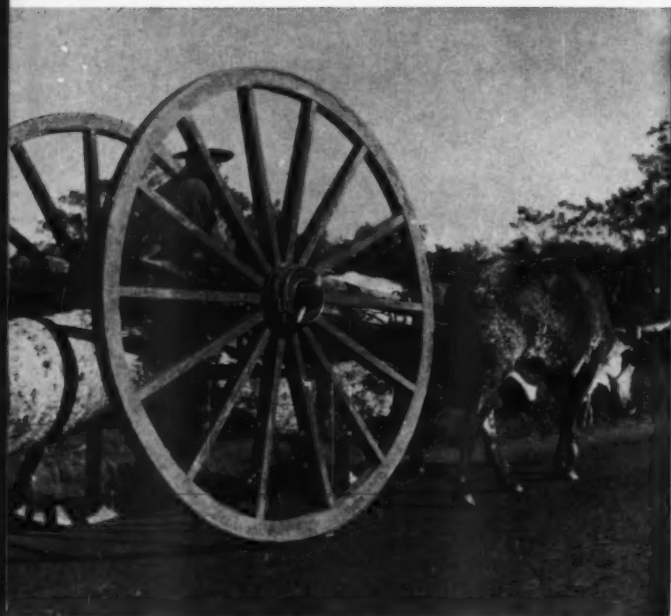
Paraguay—ranges of hills, lakes, meadows, and streams blessed with countless waterfalls, all succeeding one another. For more than a hundred miles it runs amidst forest and jungle. Here, in a profusion of varied animal and plant life, is the home of the bellbird, whose limpid musical note bears an extraordinary resemblance to the metallic clangor of bells. This in turn inspired a very popular composition in which the bird's call is imitated with equal fidelity on the native harp. But, with all its beauty, this region is filled with natural obstacles that it took modern machinery and an effort of will to conquer.

Between Puerto Presidente Stroessner and the Brazilian town of Foz do Iguassú, named after the magnificent falls near by, a bridge is under construction across the Paraná River. A third of a mile long, with a 960-foot concrete central span, it will serve not merely as a national frontier and a means of communication but as a symbol of understanding between two neighbors. This amity goes far indeed: the Brazilians are paying for the bridge, they are continuing the road on their side to connect with the main highway network, and they have declared their Atlantic port of Paranaguá a free port for Paraguay. All of which opens up to an inland country new possibilities for contact with the outside world and for economic diversification.

Similarly, the proud new trans-Chaco route is a pres-

age of prosperity for a vast area that until now has had no roads but those opened by stoic draft animals and hardy cowboys, passable in cars only in the dry season. The Chaco, which occupies some seventy-seven thousand square miles, more than half the country's territory, is a plain covered with palm groves, pasture lands where more than four million head of cattle graze, and extensive forests. About sixty-five miles of the road have been completed, starting from Villa Hayes. (This old town was renamed in honor of the nineteenth U.S. President, who, chosen by Paraguay and Argentina to arbitrate a boundary dispute involving the strip of land on which it is situated, decided in favor of the former.) The next step is to extend it to Philadelphia, a busy town that is a center for the colonies of Mennonite immigrants from Canada, the United States, and Europe. Later, in successive stages, it will be pushed through all the way to Bolivia. One of the most remarkable, and heartening, things about this project is that it represents the joint efforts of several groups collaborating for the common good—local stock-raisers, the Mennonite colonies, the Government, and the Point Four mission.

Something no urban center can do without nowadays is a modern system of running water. For the first time in its more than four centuries of history, Asunción now has one, officially inaugurated on August 15 of last



Oxen still draw giant-wheeled lumber carts in forest regions



Delicate ñanduti lace work is specialty of town of Itauguá



Asunción Cathedral, completed in 1850 on site of colonial predecessor, reflects Italian Renaissance style



Rural newlyweds ride to new home. Wedding guests follow, also on horseback

year. The household wells and cisterns that formerly supplied the people of the capital have been sacrificed on the altar of progress. It is estimated that, unlike so many cities plagued with water shortages, Asunción will have more than it needs even if the passage of time should convert it into a large metropolis, for its source is the mighty Paraguay River.

And can Asunción be only eleven hours from New York? It seems impossible. But Pan American and Aerolíneas Argentinas recently started jet service, and other international lines are making overtures about extending their flights to Asunción. The new airport offers ample facilities for the giant birds. But it's hard to keep up the pace progress requires; one thing leads

to another. For example, it was inevitable that as soon as a modern airport was decided upon someone should be inspired with the necessity of building a hotel that would provide the kind of comfort present-day standards take for granted and fastidious tourists demand. The Institute of Social Welfare has undertaken the task, and the hotel will probably open sometime this year.

What's new in Paraguay? For many years, nothing much was, but that is no longer true. With such projects as the five I have briefly described, it is becoming a better place to live in and a better place to visit, affording foreigners an opportunity to familiarize themselves with a country that is known more for its historic past than for its present or its promising future. ☺



AMID SUN AND SAMBAS

Professor Angel A. Casasco took a group of Argentine architecture students on a study-tour of Brazilian cities, and jotted down these impressions of the trip for the Buenos Aires magazine Nuestra Arquitectura:

Rio de Janeiro. Suffocating heat, nervous traffic. Avenida Rio Branco reminds me of Avenida de Mayo; the vertical exhausts spout soot. Cine-landia, the knot of all traffic. The streetcar terminal called *taboleiro da Bahiana* [the tray Bahia women carry on their heads], and sambas wherever you go, more sambas, and cold sugarcane juice with its potential tropical fevers. Guaraná, Coca-Cola, thousands of gallons of cold drinks. I dream of an orangeade-dispenser all day. Finally, Copacabana, a band of shadeless sand, tourists, sun bathers, a greenish-blue sea. At night an endless procession of . . . the latest Detroit models, inviting women, more Guaraná. They tell me Copacabana has been reconstructed four times in the last forty years; today it is a Chinese wall built between the sea and the slums. Horizontal property, speculation, cubicles to live in; it seems like Buenos Aires; perhaps, with the Caricacas' drive, Copacabana will be torn down and rebuilt again.

Groups of samba dancers are in the streets. They stop the streetcars, and like snow balls, as they advance they pick up more and more mulattoes, Negroes, maracas, tambourines, trumpets, flutes. Carnival is already in the streets. The Minister of Education receives me. "What do you think

of Rio? Are you having a good time?" "Sir," I explain, "I need an airplane to take my students to Brasília." "See the rector, perhaps he will help you; enjoy yourselves." The rector: "How's it going? Are you having a good time?" "Sir," I reply, "we didn't come here as tourists; this is a study trip." "Aha, very well, then enjoy yourselves." "Thank you, sir."

An old Ministry of Education bus takes us on a tour of the city; Pedregulho [a low-cost housing project] is unfinished, abandoned: it was a social error. The slum conquered the architect (Reidy). Sérgio Bernardes' exhibition hall is a parade of technique and creative audacity; a concrete perimetrical compression ring, a horizontal structure of steel cables under tension, lights measuring approximately 250 by 150 yards and covered with fiberglass and transparent vinyl resins. Everything is Brazilian-made, even the standards for estimating concrete.

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We go to the firm of the Roberto brothers, the three M's. The Rua do Ouvidor reminds me of an alley in Genoa, heat. Maurício Roberto arrives in shirtsleeves, apologizes for being late, and answers my questions on their [unsuccessful] entry in the contest for the Brasília city plan. The Italian *piazza* and the limited neighborhood unit, all carefully studied in detail, the well-known principle of small satellite cities and large neighborhood units that, joined together, aspire to be a great capital. Moving sidewalks from the *piazza* to the homes. Something is basically wrong, for all

that [the Robertos] try to show the contrary by means of their exhaustive study, the hundreds of thousands of cruzeiros the project cost, statistics, and so on. In my opinion, the basic concept is what is wrong; the M.M.M. brothers' project lacks grandeur of conception, simplicity. Maurício sweats, continues to answer my questions enthusiastically. He tells me about a proposed law that would make architects the only people authorized to design and direct architectural works and civil engineers the ones for civil projects and estimates; builders—magnates today—would be restricted to working with the designs, estimates, and direction of those professionals. It would be bliss! Or would the architect become a luxury professional as in the past? He would probably be absorbed by the construction monopolies.

Cabo Frio, a kind of new Punta del Este near Rio; the cold current of the South Atlantic and warm winds of the tropics make the region a vacation and week-end paradise. Maurício explains in detail the regional planning and how it will be progressively carried out through self-financing. A carefully detailed plan, even to the late-model car driving by. What good would it be without a late model full of baroque details lubricated in Detroit *pour épater le bourgeois*, a nine-hole golf course, and *boutiques*? . . .

We leave the M.M.M. Robertos. I feel that their outlook is not exactly mine, but that of a social class of *bons vivants*, which I have nothing against, but which leaves me cold.

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University City. Big offices in the

Ministry of Finance—near the gold? The amiable Dr. Jorge Moreira gives us an escort and his own station wagon for the visit. It is two o'clock and it is 100° in the shade; humidity, 80 per cent. We cross Rio toward the north—it looks like Barracas or Avellaneda—and arrive at a group of nine islands that were united to form the University City island; Macacos Island, near Galeão, remains to be tied in. We visit the buildings of the schools of engineering and architecture. The latter is a paradise for students and professors, with private classrooms, professors' rooms with private cubicles, marvelous views of Guanabara Bay. In short, the maximum desideratum, in every detail, of comfort and quality. Excellent materials and techniques but, to my way of thinking, architecture that is too official, impersonal, something like our Ministry of Finance—fine quality but lack of genius.

The Rio architecture students, some two hundred all together, refuse to move from Vermelha Beach, with its romantic but efficient colonial buildings, to the inhospitable paradise of the University City. A failure of government planning? I believe a contributing factor is the lack of integration of the study of pure architecture with the social aspect of planning. The resultant divorce is probably the reason for the students' refusal to move to a semi-perfect building that is, however, unintegrated, even isolated, and without "atmosphere," which is so necessary for teaching architecture. We return covered with red dust and with one more experience chalked up.

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Roberto Burle Marx is like an oasis in the frivolous and carnivalesque world of Rio. The project he is working on is an enormous park for Caracas, with a zoo, botanical garden, and walks; with walls made up of bas-reliefs, and nature in a man-made natural garden. This intellectual combines the wisdom of a master gardener and a learned botanist with an almost morbid aesthetic sensitivity. "Come to my farm this week end and I'll show you my philodendrons, 121 different species. What a dream!" "Thank you, but I can't. I have to go to São Paulo." . . .

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We arrive at São Paulo in the rain. . . . Huge public works follow one another without a break; the highway is being doubled in width. Cutting through hills of rock and red earth is already a tradition in Brazil. In Rio they cut down the whole Santo Antônio Hill and threw it into the sea at Flamengo Bay; now nothing remains but the old convent and the brilliant Avenida Chile. . . .

São Paulo is something different. It is a mixture of Buenos Aires, Rio, and New York. You feel a strength, a socio-economic force that is overpowering even at night. . . .

Brazilian architecture is like a tropical fruit, exotic and exuberant, but not seasonal and without the flavor of the fruit of regions with a harsher climate. The lack of quality in Brazilian buildings seems to be a secondary aspect. Brazil's problem is that of an architecture that obliges technique to serve it and not, as happens in the United States, of the architect's being a slave to *Sweet's Catalogue*. Brazil has undergone such enormous industrial growth in the last few years that its impact made itself felt on architecture. The architects must achieve; they plan at the same time they build; they work out details right on the job; they require industry to produce new materials, aluminum shapes, steel structures, pre-shaped concrete forms, plastics, a whole *ad hoc* technology; in short, a sea of demands.

The product: an advanced and complete building industry. Their Atlas elevators are excellent; their structural steel from Volta Redonda permitted construction of the Rio Jockey Club tower (Lúcio Costa) in record time; their aluminum window frames are excellent, their ceramics marvelous. Quality will be achieved some day. Today they have no time; they are like ants in summer.

Ibirapuera Park, with its buildings left over from the Biennial, has the charm of Oscar Niemeyer's work; their freshness is in contrast to the look of the commercial structures in Rua Barão de Itapetininga.

São Paulo reminds me of Venice. Walking, climbing, going down, bridges not over canals but over avenues, true canals of traffic. This

city, the most vigorous in South America, is destined to be one of the most important in the world.

In the Planning Department at City Hall, Mr. Lodi greets us cordially; he has almost an Italian accent. He explains at length the city's problems, the enormous growth of São Paulo and the accidents of topography; hills like fists within the city, levels, rock, industrial density along the lines of communication. An urbanistic chaos that is hard to resolve. . . .

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The Brasilia airport is temporary. The buses too. Everything is temporary, to give way tomorrow to the real thing, THE NEW CAPITAL, the dream of J. K. [President Juscelino Kubitschek] and Oscar Niemeyer. Who was it told me in Buenos Aires that the region was arid? I have seen a five-acre farm with corn, vegetables, and even a vineyard with grapes! In the future, Brasília will supply itself; today it gets everything from a town 125 miles away. . . . Dr. Oscar N. receives us in his home in the working-class neighborhood and offers to conduct us on a tour of the Palácio da Alvorada (Dawn Palace, the presidential residence). On the way we pass through a temporary settlement that looks like the Far West: dust, but in place of wagons it has Brazilian Mercedes-Benz, Ford, and G.M. trucks, and DKW jeeps and Volkswagens, also Brazilian. The rest really belongs in a movie. The only thing lacking was for the swinging doors of some saloon to be opened and a drunk tossed out.

Palácio da Alvorada. Choice location on a peninsula in what is to be a big lake. Conception, that of a genius. Despite my "Miesian" views on structure, how could I object to the fact that the columns in front are sculptural? How could I help admitting that the shape achieved conquers my formal scruples? Oscar Niemeyer has produced a masterpiece. It is raining. The tropics want to make us pay for trampling their red earth. We must take off our shoes to enter the palace. J. K. is about to arrive, and we must not leave our profane tracks on the granite. Mirrors of glass and laminated gold alternate with albino and sepia wood ornaments; floors of tropical hardwoods with exotic names al-

ternate with ceramic tiles and Persian rugs. . . . An orgy for photographer-architects and architect-photographers. . . . Bathrooms of oriental luxury, sunken bathtubs of polished granite, crystal, and gilt fittings. Everything is justified, even air-conditioning in this privileged climate. This visit moves me profoundly and Oscar's modesty—and restrained pride, at the same time—is really touching. We leave the palace with a tremendous desire to return. . . .

The afternoon wears on. The bus goes tracking through the red mud; the windows frame changing landscapes, and I have to work to find familiar landmarks. Eventually we arrive at the church of a neighborhood unit, a dynamic structure in the midst of the static forms of the housing. Buildings, half-finished works, shopping center, trucks full of workmen careening toward the sambas and cane juice of the cardboard Main Street.

Finally, the group of orange steel frames of the ministries, the base of the twenty-eight-floor towers of offices prefabricated by Bethlehem Steel and put up like a giant erector set by a group of Brazilian riveters and a superintendent from New Jersey. The enormous platform that serves as plaza and base for the hemispheres of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate is connected with the surrounding roadway by delicate triangular ramps.

Tremendous earth-moving activities and gigantic works in progress express the vigor of a band of pioneers and the dreaming politician who is J. K. Oscar Niemeyer explains in broad outline the planning and the progress of the work. With a staff of fifty professionals they carry on all the work of this city for half a millón inhabitants and also solve on the spot the enormous problems of organization and transportation, and even the social problems of a temporary community of sixty thousand.

All work with the conviction that in April 1960 the government buildings and the living quarters will be ready. The caravan of statesmen will start from Belém, in the North, and cover the twelve hundred miles of the fabulous new road that cuts through 310 miles of Amazonian jungle. This work, little known abroad, is really extraor-

dinary and as significant as Brasília itself. The whole road is now ready to be paved and will be inaugurated jointly with the new capital.

This road has cost many lives and sacrifices. The engineers traveled by helicopter, the construction crews and equipment were dropped by parachute, and armed guards and health stations had to be provided along the route. The two engineers who headed the undertaking, one starting from Belém and the other from Brasília, died on the job a week before meeting midway. One was killed in an airplane accident, and on the day the two teams met, the last tree that was cut down fell on the other, Bernardo Saião, a true pioneer and the soul of the project and its execution. In an emotional eulogy, J. K. said, "Thus the jungle has taken its tribute from one who dared to violate its secrets. The road, a pathway of the liberation and grandeur of our nation, shall bear his name."

In an aside, Oscar N. explains details of the regional planning that must be carried out in Rio. He says he has had to establish himself permanently in Brasília to carry out the plan of the new capital; afterwards he would travel.

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I say goodbye sadly. I want to stay but fate decrees otherwise. On the trip back to São Paulo I doze and recall the dream of a Minister of Aeronautics of the Argentine revolutionary government, of moving the federal capital to a spot in Córdoba near Río Tercero. At that time I was planning consultant, and, faced with the magnitude of the proposal, I brought together the strongest team I could find in the country: the best economist, the top expert on administrative law, and a specialist in national planning. After a few meetings, it all came to nothing. Will the Argentines always be only theoreticians instead of doers?

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São Paulo by night looks like a million interlaced pearl necklaces, with jet stones interspersed, the hills deserted, and finally the lighted landing field of Congonhas. The track of the Curtiss on the damp strip marks the end of an unforgettable Sunday.

LIFE STORY

With this article John McKelway, a staff writer for The Sunday Star of Washington, did his bit to help an art gallery celebrate a significant anniversary:

There are two ways of looking at the two lions you pass between before entering the majestic front door of the Corcoran Gallery of Art. An impressionist, noting their sleepy indifference, might conclude that here is a symbol for the gallery within. The Corcoran is a hundred years old and shows its age in spots. Like the lions, its heritage is early Washington with a trace of European culture.

The lions once lazed around a home owned by Ben Holladay . . . and were cast from the original mold of some that guard the cenotaph of Pope Clement XIII in Rome. Mr. Holladay lost a fortune when Indians and railroads wiped out his stage coaches and mail contracts. He died in 1887. A year later the lions were auctioned off for nineteen hundred dollars and landed at the Corcoran, then housed in a portly . . . building [that is now] the United State Court of Claims.

William Wilson Corcoran had founded the gallery in 1859. He was born in Georgetown in 1798, . . . [and] at seventeen [had] started a dry-goods business, which subsequently failed. He then took up managing his father's property and by 1836 had set up his own brokerage house. In 1840 he entered into a partnership with one George W. Riggs, and, together, they bought the Bank of the United States, or the present Riggs National Bank.

Mr. Corcoran retired in 1854 and turned to art and philanthropy, saying he wanted to encourage "American genius." In a few years his art collection needed more room, and by 1897 the present gallery at Seventeenth Street and New York Avenue, N.W., was completed. Mr. Corcoran, however, one of the first art collectors in the United States, a local boy who had opened his gallery before either the Metropolitan Museum in New York or the Boston Museum of Fine Arts was ready, never saw the substantial, fortress-like lines of his new building. He died in 1888 at the age of eighty-nine.

Meanwhile, the lions . . . continued

to sun themselves in front of the city's first cultural center.

If an abstractionist were to follow that impressionist up the steps of the Gallery, he might also feel there was something symbolic in the two lions—something equally true of the Gallery. For the lions may be ready to pounce and bound into the future. There, the abstractionist would probably stop—possibly pleased with himself in feeling the dawn of renaissance. He might even paint it.

Actually, officials and directors of the gallery see some substance in either view of the lions. But they are of the realistic school. It is their conclusion that if the gallery is to make more of a cultural impact, more of a contribution, not only here but throughout the United States, a fund drive must be started and an appeal made to the general public. This they have done—for the first time in the Corcoran's history—and without worrying whether the lions symbolize anything but lionhood.

In recent years, the Gallery has been waiting a little longer to turn on the heat in the fall. In the summer it has closed some rooms and some exhibitions because it lacks air-conditioning. It has, after the cost was totaled, forgotten some exhibitions that were planned. Some paintings it might have bought—paintings that could have filled in some gaps in the Gallery's architecture of American painting—have slipped elsewhere, into the hands of private collectors or younger galleries. It has found plaster peeling from some of its walls, detracting from the quality of a Winslow Homer, a Thomas Eakins, a Rembrandt Peale, or a John Singer Sargent.

The Corcoran has only five guards. . . . Within two weeks [in December] it had one theft and one attempted theft. . . .

Despite the financial bind, the Corcoran feels . . . life on its hundredth birthday. . . . Besides hanging up its masterpieces for any and all who would spend a few moments in awe of beauty and skill, the Corcoran teaches. It has the best art school in town, started in 1893. The fees are reasonable. The school instructs anyone bitten by the art bug, including children only seven years old who would rather paint than talk, and retired businessmen or ad-

mirals who may be finding contentment for the first time in pushing a brush over canvas. Yet the classes are necessarily limited, the rooms somewhat dingy, and the light poor. The Gallery also conducts commercial-art classes.

The Gallery's twenty-five hundred "members"—those who annually contribute ten dollars and up—are treated to a variety of lectures and movies of merit. Lectures range from city planning to sculpture. One examined the use of the scientific method in art. Last year, there was a talk on "Greeks, Indians, and Americans." Recent movies have been *High Noon*, *Grand Hotel*, *Les Enfants Terribles*, *The Lost Weekend*, and *All the King's Men*. . . .

To the U.S. painter—most of them are struggling—the Corcoran offers a chance at recognition and appreciation. Through the gallery, he might even sell something.

In 1907, the "Biennials" were started, a special exhibition open to all states and [territories]. Here the currents of art, the trends, the confusions are up for examination every two years. It is the only show of its kind in the United States. Over the years, it has attracted such names as Edward Hopper, Abraham Rattner, Winslow Homer, John Singer Sargent, Thomas Eakins, and John Marin. Entries usually run about two thousand.

By staging its "area" exhibitions, the Gallery offers local artists a big chance at a reputation. Entries—there were 1,853 this year—include oils, water colors, sculptures, prints, ceramics, silver and textile work. The artists represented are traditional, conservative, or, perhaps, completely wild. One entered a painting on velvet. It was rejected.

The Gallery regularly comes up with displays of its own paintings, supplemented and linked with others borrowed elsewhere. One of the best was "The American Muse," an exhibition presented last April. With a readable program it traced the parallel trends in literature and art. The rich landscapes of the "Hudson River School" were coupled with the writings of Henry David Thoreau. Edward Hopper, and his fascination with the play of sunlight, provided the scene for the words of Thomas Wolfe: ". . . But for the modern painter, the most desolate scene would be a street in almost any

one of our great cities on a Sunday afternoon." (An exhibition like "The American Muse" costs the gallery about seven thousand dollars—much of it to insure and crate pictures brought from elsewhere. The Metropolitan, in New York, stages exhibitions that cost up to seventy thousand.)

But for those who cannot draw an egg, who shun events that draw people, the Corcoran also provides. It is rich in the works of the U.S. artists who emerged despite de Tocqueville's feeling that Americans "will habitually prefer the useful to the beautiful, and they will require that the beautiful should be useful."

The collection—which beckons the tourist or one who would hide for a while—is basically American. It runs from the ubiquitous portraits of the American Revolution to the works of the men who went west and brought back the grandeur. "The Ashcan School"—made up of artists captured by the prosaic—is represented in one case by George Bellows and his direct, sparkling treatment of forty-two kids at a swimming hole, painted in 1907. One of the latest acquisitions is something called *Hot House*, which may be or may not be. But it is a part of the recent chapter of U.S. art.

The collection also includes the gifts of the late W. A. Clark, a senator from Montana, who turned over to the Corcoran tapestries, two Rembrandts, and a number of priceless paintings by the French romantics. His gift also made possible the construction of another wing at the Gallery.

With additional funds, Corcoran officials hope to expand the art classes, buy works of the artists the Gallery lacks—Thomas Hart Benton is one—or gamble on a rising youngster who could be famous in a decade. They would set up an educational department to help people understand the old, the in-between, and the latest in art. They would air-condition the building—which would protect ancient oils as well as improve Gallery attitudes in the Washington heat. And they undoubtedly would hire a few more guards.

Such is the situation at the Corcoran. It seems to have reached that point experienced in the lives of most of the artists represented on its high walls: it needs a little outside help.



books

RECENT U.S. NON-FICTION

Reviewed by Hubert Herring

The island republic of Cuba has held the headlines in the newspapers of all the world throughout 1959, ever since young Fidel Castro and his bearded followers marched from their camp in the eastern Sierra Maestra, drove Fulgencio Batista into exile, and took possession of Havana and the Government of Cuba. This amazing epic makes R. Hart Phillips' book *Cuba, Island of Paradox* one of the most exciting of the year. Mrs. Phillips is the dean of foreign correspondents in the Cuban capital, having lived there for thirty years, most of that time as the correspondent for *The New York Times*. Not only does she know Cuba well, and love it dearly, but she is a tough realist who has always cut through the current froth to the realities beneath. I have never known Ruby Phillips to be fooled by the nonsense of statesmen, generals, ambassadors, or peripatetic romanticists, whether Cuban or U.S. I venture that she knows more about Cuba than most Cubans and all other Americans, and she has written far and away the most astute and fair-minded book ever written about Cuba in English. She has reconstructed for us the story of what happened to President Gerardo Machado (1925-1933): the savagery of his onslaught on critics, and the fury of the populace that drove him into exile in August 1933. She has known, and known well, all the chief actors ever since—Grau San Martín, Fulgencio Batista, Sumner Welles, Mendieta, Prío Socarrás, and many others. And she has also known the common men who work in the cane fields, the university students whose consciences and tempers have flared up against the corruption and cruelty of tyrants, the businessmen and the lesser politicians of the island. With a wealth of knowledge and much understanding, she writes of the brilliant and brave campaign by which Fidel

Castro and his companions won against the well-armed forces of Batista in January 1959. For all who would understand what lies behind the current headlines, here is the book to be read.

Irving Leonard takes us back to seventeenth-century Mexico in his *Baroque Times in Old Mexico*. There are many excellent books on sixteenth-century Mexico: on the Conquest and the brilliant record of the shaping of New Spain; on great statesmen such as Antonio de Mendoza and noble churchmen such as Zumárraga and Las Casas and Vasco de Quiroga. But the seventeenth century has been neglected. Now that "baroque century" has been brilliantly interpreted for us by Professor Leonard. His book is a series of deft profiles that convey the contrasting dullness and brilliance of the period. The dullness is epitomized in the Dominican friar García Guerra, who arrived early in the century with an appointment as Archbishop of Mexico and who shortly won additional laurels as Viceroy of New Spain. He was an uninspired little man who appreciated good food and wine, and found solace in the sweet music of the nuns in the Royal Convent of Jesus and Mary. His services as combined Archbishop and Viceroy lasted little over a year, and no one missed him greatly when he "surrendered his spirit to the Lord"—just as few held in high regard most of the appointees of the Crown during those "baroque" years. There was brilliance, too, in that period: the most charming and the most radiant figure was that of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz. Mr. Leonard gives a sensitive sketch of that most gifted poet of Spanish-colonial America. Born in 1651, she showed as a young girl such intellectual prowess as to confound her elders; her eager mind ranged afield in mathematics, sci-

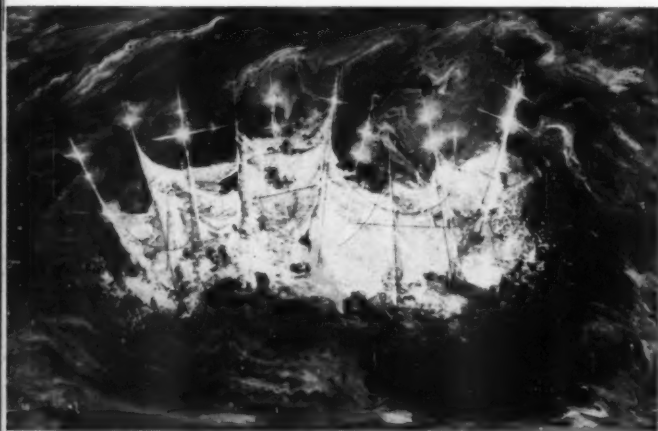
ence, music. She caught the attention of the Viceroy's wife and was the darling of the viceregal court. At seventeen she took her vows in a Hieronymite convent, and for the remainder of her forty-three years she lived with her books, wrote poetry, speculated on science, and corresponded with wise men in many countries. Her verse was varied: love lyrics, carols, allegories, even comedies. Although cast in the labored syntax of Luis de Góngora, her verse had a subtlety and a grace that have given her writing an enduring place in the literature of Spanish America. Mr. Leonard also includes the great seventeenth-century scholar Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora, whose "bold spirit of scientific inquiry" flowered in the "miasmatic atmosphere of ignorance, fear and superstition which he breathed." A master of mathematics, a prober into science, he stands as a pioneer thinker of his times.

Tad Szulc, a brilliant young reporter for *The New York Times*, exhibits firm historical skill in his *Twilight of the Tyrants*. It is a sound and heartening recital of the steady progress towards democracy in Latin America during recent years. It centers in the story of five dictators who played their tyrant's role and were then unseated by nations that are increasingly determined to live in constitutional freedom. There is a chapter on Getúlio Vargas, who served Brazil so brilliantly for a time and then finally ended in such bitter disgrace. Vargas was a very wise man in many ways, often devious, and never cruel—one of the best of the dictators. Then the author gives us Juan Domingo Perón, whose decade of tyranny left Argentina gasping for breath as that able nation sought recovery from the moral and economic wreckage he left as his unpleasant heritage. The third dictator, Manuel Odría of Peru, is depicted in a more agreeable light. There was order and prosperity under Odría's able hand. There was iron-handed suppression of civil rights, but there were more food for the hungry, more schools and hospitals for the common man, and better government than Peru had experienced for many years. And, finally, Odría stepped aside at the end of his elected term, and permitted the free choice of his successor. But Mr. Szulc has little good to say of Colom-



bia's Rojas Pinilla and Venezuela's Pérez Jiménez. He recites the facts on their destruction of government efficiency and decency, their conscienceless speculations of public funds, their ferociousness in dealing with critics. And he describes fairly the honorable role of angry citizens in putting an end to two of the most outrageous despotisms that have ever humiliated two great American nations. Mr. Szulc has one word of oblique praise for Rojas Pinilla: that despot so outraged the sensibilities of both major political parties that he drove them to make peace between themselves for the purpose of ejecting him and to accept a truce that promises a constructive era for the Colombian people. This excellent book should be required reading for all who direct the inter-American policy of the United States.

To all who are interested in United States history I commend Margaret Leech's *In the Days of McKinley*. It is a brilliant analysis of one of the pivotal eras in the history of the United States, as well as a portrait of one of the most meager Presidents. The eighteen-nineties were the years when the North American union was finding itself in the world community. These were the years when the old isolation was breaking down, when blatant nationalists were talking of "manifest destiny" and of the obligation of Americans to shoulder responsibility not only for their own sins and promises but for lands over the seas. The war with Spain in 1898 was an inevitable result of this new mood. It was an entirely unnecessary little war: Spain was quite ready to quit Cuba without a fight; McKinley could have avoided the war had he been bold and intelligent. But the bellicose strategists in Washington, supported by the "yellow" press in New York, had to have their war. McKinley, "the captive of caution and indirection," could do nothing to avoid the conflict. All of which was sad enough, but the picture of weak McKinley is further complicated by his pathetic talk about "the moral mission of America." Miss Leech gives a sensitive and poignant portrait of a greatly loved and little admired man who failed miserably in the leadership of his nation in a critical period of its history.



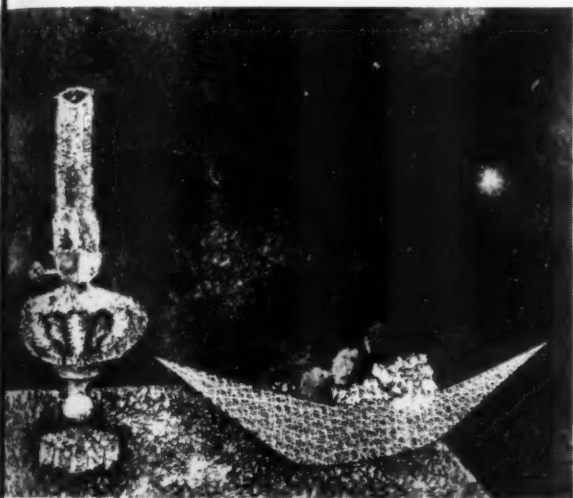
Paintings on these pages by Leonardo Nierman of Mexico

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Isaac Don Levine's *The Mind of an Assassin* is a vivid account of the GPU's successful assassination of Leon Trotsky in Mexico in 1940. It is the story of the carefully laid plot whereby Ramón Mercador, directed by his mother, a Spanish Communist who had taken a hand in a score of "political executions," secured access to Trotsky's well-policed home in Mexico and killed one of the greatest of Russia's leaders with an icepick. When one considers the still-immense influence of the victim of that plot, and the many millions in and out of Russia who revere his name for reasons good or bad, the excitement of the drama truthfully unfolded in this book will be apparent.

A beautiful little book about one of the rare and lovely spirits in the annals of Catholicism is Arthur Sheehan's *Peter Maurin: Gay Believer*. A French peasant inspired by love for man and for God, Peter Maurin came to the United States and founded the Catholic Workers' Movement. With Dorothy Day, ex-socialist and convert to the Catholic Church, he founded in 1932 a penny newspaper, *The Catholic Worker*, which has exerted great influence on U.S. Catholicism. He set out to prove that social



radicalism is not equivalent to atheism. Inspired by the social pronouncements of Pope Leo XIII, Peter Maurin set out to practice the Sermon on the Mount. Some twenty-five "houses of hospitality" were founded, where thousands of men and women who had lost all hope found shelter and affection. His was no great intellect: his writings were naïve, his solutions were always too simple. His greatness lay in the quality of heart that knew without argument that all men are brothers. He was a twentieth-century Francis of Assisi calling for peace in a world torn by war, and for justice in an angry world. The author of this little book is too much a disciple of Peter Maurin's to write objectively, but the man's spirit is here.

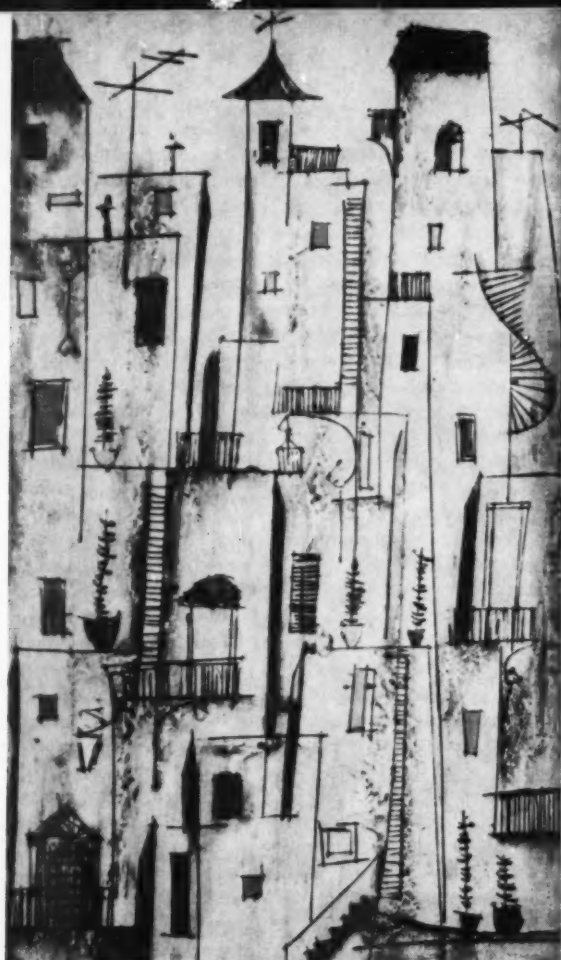
Van Wyck Brooks' *Howells, His Life and World* is a swift, impressionistic portrait of William Dean Howells, who dominated the literary life of the United States during the last half of the nineteenth century and on into the

twentieth. Howells' novels are little read today, either inside or outside the United States, and are usually dismissed as "period pieces," interesting only to those concerned with the history of literature. But his work cannot be so lightly brushed aside. During his reign over U.S. letters, in a period when a stale Victorianism snuffed out the fire of new ideas and insights, Howells was forever opening the windows to let in fresh air and sunlight. He helped to give an American audience to Björnson, Tolstoy, Zola, and Ibsen. He discovered scores of American poets and novelists and used his vast prestige to make sure that his countrymen should read Vachel Lindsay, Robert Frost, Edwin Arlington Robinson, Ed Howe, Hamlin Garland, Frank Norris, and many another. Modern readers will find that it is worth the time to go back and reread Howells' *The Rise of Silas Lapham* and *A Modern Instance*.

It is a bit late to remind readers of Richard H. Rovere's *Senator Joe McCarthy*, but no armchair student of United States contemporary history can afford to miss that extraordinary portrait of the man who did so much to poison the wells of decency. Rovere, as all who read his columns in *The New Yorker* know well, is one of the most astute analysts of the American political scene. We who live in the United States are proud that we have had no dictators, but perhaps we do well to remind ourselves that we came perilously close to a dictatorship of sorts so long as Joe McCarthy was unchecked. The specter was finally banished when he appeared for hours and days on the television screen, and the people finally saw him as he was. By all means, read Rovere. It will give you fresh reassurance on the power of democracy.

And here is a beautiful bit of writing—about writing. Charles W. Fergusson, an editor of the ubiquitous *Reader's Digest*, gives us *Say It with Words*. Mr. Fergusson has earned the right to advise us on words: he writes beautifully, as all who read his *Naked to Mine Enemies* (the life of Cardinal Wolsey) cheerfully attest. In his current book—which he obviously had much fun in writing, and which any reader interested in using the English tongue will enjoy immensely—he tells how to go about stringing words together. Use words as pictures, he tells us: think in pictures, and paint pictures with words—"the mind is not caged by words or held back by the drags of conventional usage." Or, again, he bids us "mind your verbs!" He shows the vast difference between a weak verb and a strong one—"crack a verb like a whip." Further, he pleads that "information pleases." He says, "Words will not behave in modern informal prose unless they are fortified by facts." Obvious? Of course. But look again at much stringing together of words in articles and essays, and you too will clamor for facts, more facts.

Everyone enjoys the record of a spirited scrap, and so I suggest you read John W. Spanier's *The Truman-MacArthur Controversy and the Korean War*. Almost nine years ago President Truman (formerly Captain Truman) dismissed General Douglas MacArthur from his post in the Far East. The action induced a major convulsion in the United States: Truman was burned in effigy in one city, and there was talk of impeachment.



Mr. Spanier does an excellent job of reconstructing the backgrounds and foregrounds of the episode. And no matter what one may think of the principals in the drama, the fact remains that it served to make abundantly clear that, for the United States, the supremacy of civil authority over the military is a firmly held article of national faith.

It was fitting that Walter Lippmann's seventieth birthday should be celebrated with a book called *Walter Lippmann and His Times*. Edited by Marquis Childs and James Reston, it contains essays by able journalists, an expert on Russia, two historians. Walter Lippmann, first as editor and then for thirty years as the most widely read of columnists, has held the respectful attention of more people concerned over national and international affairs than any writer in the United States. Year in and year out, his comments have won a hearing that has increased rather than lessened. James Reston quotes Lippmann to the effect that we will all survive our crises best "if among us there are men who have stood apart, who refused to be anxious or too much concerned, who were cool and inquiring and had their eyes on the longer past and a longer future." Mr. Lippmann has well described his own role.

Professor Hubert Herring of the Claremont Graduate School is AMÉRICA's regular book correspondent in the United States.

CUBA, ISLAND OF PARADOX, by R. Hart Phillips. New York, McDowell, Obolensky, 1959. 434 p. \$4.95

BAROQUE TIMES IN OLD MEXICO, by Irving A. Leonard. Ann Arbor, The University of Michigan Press, 1959. 260 p. \$6.50

TWILIGHT OF THE TYRANTS, by Tad Szulc. New York, Henry Holt and Company, 1959. 313 p. \$4.50

IN THE DAYS OF MCKINLEY, by Margaret Leech. New York, Harper and Brothers, 1959. 686 p. \$6.95

THE MIND OF AN ASSASSIN, by Isaac Don Levine. New York, Farrar, Straus & Cudahy, 1959. 232 p. \$4.50

PETER MAURIN: GAY BELIEVER, by Arthur Sheehan. New York, Hanover House, 1959. 217 p. \$3.75

HOWELLS, HIS LIFE AND WORLD, by Van Wyck Brooks. New York, E. P. Dutton Co., 1959. 296 p. \$5.00

SENATOR JOE MCCARTHY, by Richard H. Rovere. New York, Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1959. \$3.95

SAY IT WITH WORDS, by Charles W. Fergusson. New York, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1959. 214 p. \$3.50

THE TRUMAN-MACARTHUR CONTROVERSY AND THE KOREAN WAR, by John W. Spanier. Cambridge, Massachusetts, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1959. 311 p. \$6.50

WALTER LIPPMANN AND HIS TIMES, edited by Marquis Childs and James Reston. New York, Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1959. 238 p. \$3.95

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MISUNDERSTOOD "COLOSSUS"

As a Latin American friend of the United States and a modest promoter of inter-American relations, I take the liberty of making a few suggestions that may help to smooth out some of the difficulties between the two Americas. I do not seek to deal with questions that are the province of politicians and statesmen, but rather with some that seem less important but are actually just as significant.

I believe that the principal cause of hostility toward the United States is lack of knowledge about it among Latin Americans. My own country, Uruguay, is perhaps the one with the warmest feelings of friendship, but even here there is a certain group that believes that North Americans are only interested in money, that U.S. women are divorced four or five times, and so on. . . .

Understanding could be fomented by means of radio, movies, books, and so on. It would be a good idea to show films demonstrating how farmers, workers, and the middle class live in the United States. There should also be films about the lives and works of eminent North Americans—heroes, scholars, pioneers, and especially those who sacrificed themselves for the good of their fellow men. I remember seeing some time ago a picture about the cowboy. It was magnificent. But it was shown at the Artigas-Washington Library, which is frequented only by educated people. Many such films should also be presented in the neighborhood theaters, where ordinary people go. Radio talks could be given on these topics and others; there could be programs devoted to U.S. popular, folk, and serious music. There should be more books about U.S. men and things in our bookstores. Only recently, wanting a biography of Washington, I tried six of the leading Montevideo bookstores in vain; I found it in the seventh, and they had only one copy.

Exchange of correspondence should also be encouraged. From my own experience I can say that its benefits are incalculable. . . .

Many Latin Americans feel resentful on comparing the economic situation of their countries with that of the United States. Undoubtedly, many circumstances have conspired against economic development in Latin America, but anyone who learns a little about the past and present of the United States will see that its prosperity did not drop from heaven. Here, too, I believe

that films and radio could give people an idea of what initiative and effort have achieved in the United States . . . to exploit natural resources and create them where there were none. They would realize that if it is true that the latter should do all it can to raise the economic level of the former, the former would also do well to follow the latter's example.

María Elena Garet
Montevideo, Uruguay

WE MEANT WELL

The article by Armando Samper, "Through the Streets of San José," in the August 1959 issue is so interesting and factual that I have to suppress an urge to write a sequel under the title "Costa Rica Forty-five Years Ago." At that time there was very little tourist trade, and many of the fine things that Dr. Samper describes had not yet developed. Cartago had not entirely recovered from the earthquake, the peace monument was a pile of rubble, and the inhabitants were friendly and unhurried.

On page 12 of Dr. Samper's article is the statement "Irazú (11,322 feet), which has been in eruption since 1910." I climbed Irazú the second week in August 1914, went down to the bottom of the crater, dropped a rock into the opening, and waited some seconds to hear the sound it made when it struck. The people at Cartago told me that it had not been active for many, many years. They gave me the date, but I have forgotten it. Sometime after I returned to the States, in 1916, I read a press report that it had reactivated. . . .

Incidentally, there was no road up the mountain at that time. We were told the general direction, went up and up till evening, put up at a ranch house at about ten thousand feet, left on foot at 3:00 A.M., and were at the edge of the crater some little time before daybreak. I was able to read newsprint by flashlight.

Francis W. Steele
Huntington, West Virginia

Our apologies to Dr. Samper and to our readers. The phrase concerning the eruption of Irazú was added by the editors, in a misguided attempt to provide additional factual information. It was taken from a reference work we considered unimpeachable, but of course, Mr. Steele's first-hand report is more trustworthy.

BOUQUETS

The most convincing way I can think of to prove to you how much I enjoy every issue of AMÉRICAS is to tell you that I have subscribed to it for five years and have renewed my subscription for 1960. . . . It is interesting, authentic, human, modest despite its excellence, and also true and impartial. . . . Could one ask for more? My congratulations to all the men and women responsible for producing it.

Teófilo N. Baidaff
Santa Fe, Argentina

We (the members of the Cambridge Trans-

American Expedition) have been fascinated by the many articles in your magazine. As we are going to be traveling through the countries which you cover, . . . we feel that the more we know before we go there the less chance of stepping on anyone's toes and the more chance of including things of interest to the general public, with the aim of generating more cordial relations between all concerned. . . .

The purpose of our expedition, which will range from Punta Arenas to Alaska, is to study the various forms of animal husbandry practiced in the countries through which we pass, to make physical and psychological studies of the expedition members, and to make a complete cinematographic study of both human and geographical conditions.

Anthony Churchill
London, England

MUSHI

Please give us an article on South Americans who have traveled to North America afoot or via bicycle, motorcycle, and auto, and also on those who went the other way.

R. Geist
Bronx, New York

Some years ago AMÉRICAS did publish one or two such articles, but nowadays these feats are becoming more and more common, and they receive wide publicity in the newspapers of the towns through which the travelers pass.

CHESS CONTEST

The Liga Argentina de Ajedrez por Correspondencia invites all chess players in the Americas to participate in either of the two correspondence tournaments it is sponsoring this year, beginning May 1, to celebrate the sesquicentennial of the May Revolution, which initiated the struggle for Argentine independence. One tournament is open to individual players in all the Latin American countries, Spain, and Portugal and to those of Latin extraction; the other, for teams of five, to chess clubs throughout the Hemisphere and on the Iberian Peninsula. For further details and a list of the prizes to be awarded, please write as soon as possible to the Liga at Casilla de Correo 4254, Buenos Aires. Our competition will mark the first time chess fans all over America will join together in friendly rivalry.

Arturo G. Loeffler
Vice-president, LADAC
Buenos Aires, Argentina

WON'T SOMEONE WRITE?

I have been a reader of your interesting and highly significant magazine AMÉRICAS for a long time. . . . But I have written to many of the people listed in the "Mail Bag" without ever receiving an answer. I hereby wish to announce that I should like to exchange books and magazines in order to promote better understanding among peoples.

Alejandro Quartucci
Urquiza 1081
Santa Fe, Argentina

I have read and enjoyed your magazine for a year now. I have especially enjoyed the letters to the editors, but have not been able to find a pen pal through the "Mail Bag" section. It is my desire to exchange color slides of California and Washington State with someone in any of the Latin American countries. I should also like to hear from anyone interested in the field of civil engineering.

Saralee Reed
4116 Fremont Avenue
Seattle 3, Washington

INFORMATION, PLEASE

During the two years I have studied Spanish in high school I have become very much interested in the folk tales of Latin America, and I would like to know more of them. I would appreciate hearing from other readers about folk tales and unusual customs of their areas.

James Rankin
P.O. Box 235
Rocklin, California

When this letter was originally published in our December 1959 issue, it contained errors in both name and address, owing to misreading of the author's handwriting.

TRADING POST

AMÉRICAS is a true *vade mecum* of the republics belonging to the OAS. It stands out in Hemisphere journalism as a great literary effort in favor of increased closeness and understanding among Americans.

As a journalist—correspondent of the Salto newspaper *El Pueblo* in Artigas, a Uruguayan border town and twin of the Brazilian town of Quarai—I am interested in exchanging opinions, ideas, and information with journalists in the other American countries. I can correspond in Spanish, English, and French, and I also collect stamps.

Rubén J. Luraschi A.
Bbé. Rivera y Gral. Garzón
Artigas, Uruguay

I have a very unusual hobby—collecting flower, plant, and tree seeds. I would like to get in touch with people who can furnish me with some. I am also interested in discussing teen-age problems with members of that age group and with adults, and in exchanges of all kinds.

J. H. Atkisson
Canton, Kansas

With the purpose of promoting friendship among the young people of this continent, we have founded a society named "Club Internacional de Amigos." We would like to exchange correspondence between the Latin American republics and the United States.

Carlos Anaya G., Director
Apartado Postal 8160
Mexico City 1, Mexico

MAIL BAG

The following correspondents seek pen pals throughout the Hemisphere. Readers requesting this service must apply individually, print their names and addresses, and be able to write in at least two of the OAS languages (English, Spanish, Portuguese, and French), shown below by initials; students should say whether they are of high school (H) or college (C) level. Stamp collectors are indicated by an asterisk.

Carlos Gallego Caballero (S,F)
Pje. Almendros No. 7
Sardanyola, Barcelona, Spain

Charmaine Colhouer (E,S)—H
783 Kendall Avenue
Palo Alto, California

Aurora Martínez (S,P, Guaraní)
Dr. Montero 74
Asunción, Paraguay

Alicia Scarpati (E,S,F, Italian)
—C
Burgos 423, El Golf
Santiago, Chile

Bill Lemons (E,S)
106 Glenstone Road,
Hickory Hills
Dexter, Missouri

Maria Luz Dominguez B.
(E,S,F,P, Italian)
Renato Sánchez 4040, El Golf
Santiago, Chile

Arthur C. Ray (E,S,F, German)
—C*
731-46th Street
West Palm Beach, Florida

Nicanor Vallejos Mena (E,S)—C
Apartado 5700
Panama, Panama

Hipólito Jorge Laredo (E,S,F,
German, Italian)
Casilla de Correo 60
Sucre, Bolivia

Estela Silvia Hytman (S,F)
Entre Ríos 2238 Dto. 1
Rosario, Pcia. de Santa Fe
Argentina

Roberto Barreiro Gombau (E,S)
—H
Laval 1346, Piso 2do, Dto. 5
Buenos Aires, Argentina

Alberto Gazzola (E,S,P)—H*
Donaco 3262, Dto. B
Buenos Aires, Argentina

Pierre Marcel Dumont (E,S,F,
Italian)—C
Irigoyen 2428, Villa Real
Buenos Aires, Argentina

Edmund Pinho Ayers (E,P,F)
—C
Pfizer Corporation of Brazil
Box 5291
São Paulo, SP, Brazil

Ivanira Aparecida Stolf (E,S,P)
Rua Major Sertorio, 706—2°
São Paulo, SP, Brazil

Graciela Beatriz Giannattasio
(E,S)—H
Paraguay 1233, Dto. 2
Rosario de Santa Fe
Argentina

Inés Sánchez (E,S)—H
Génova 2134
Santiago, Chile

Angela Zambón R. (E,S)
Correo Central San Fernando
Chile

Vicenta María Rompello (S,P)
—H
San Juan 966
Rosario de Santa Fe
Argentina

Lyllian Escobar (E,S,F)—H*
Guadalupe 1172
San Fernando, Chile

Lillian Barros (E,S)—H
1-04 Astoria Boulevard
Long Island City 2, New York

Carmen H. Barros (E,S)—H
1-04 Astoria Boulevard
Long Island City 2, New York

Fernando Tovar H. (E,S)—C
Calle 18 Sur No. 14-15
Bogotá, Colombia

Sylvia Fehrmann (E,S)—H
Correo No. 5
Las Animas, Valdivia, Chile

Afrânio Gomes Leite (E,S,P,F)

—H
Praça Don Ulrico 119
João Pessoa, PB, Brazil

Cristiano Teixeira Lima (E,S,P)
—H
Rua Visconde de Pelotas 242
João Pessoa, PB, Brazil

Armando Leite (E,S,P,F)—H
Rua Riachuelo 108
João Pessoa, PB, Brazil

Flávio Elmano Solano (E,P,F)

—H
Parque Solon Lucena 104
João Pessoa, PB, Brazil

Virginia S. Ruiz Montaner (E,S)
—C
Boulevard Seguí 2837
Rosario, Pcia. Santa Fe
Argentina

Trina M. Muñiz Marcero (S,F)
Sarandí y No.
Rosario Oriental, Uruguay

João Batista Cardoso Jr. (E,P)
Rua Coelho Neto, 71
Campinas, SP, Brazil
Demetrio Pokrovski Jr. (E,S,
Italian)—H
Zabala 2535
Buenos Aires, Argentina

José Edgardo Isaac (E,S,F)—C
Lerma 241
Buenos Aires, Argentina

Carlos Alfredo Beltrame (E,S)
—H
Ramón L. Falcón 6673
Buenos Aires, Argentina

Marta E. Battistella (E,S,F,
Italian)—C
Carmelo 1485 bis
Montevideo, Uruguay

Manuel C. Corrales (E,S)—C
Goicuría 258, Apt. 3
Santos Suárez, La Habana
Cuba

Alab Inés Palomino U.
(E,S,F)—C
Urbanización Caldas No. 17
Popayán, Colombia

Nelson Perrone (E,S)—C
Laval 1720
Montevideo, Uruguay

Susana Beatriz Rossi (E,S)—H
Ruta No. 9
General Roca, Pcia. de Córdoba
Argentina

Vikki Louis (E,S)—H
14898 Lauder
Detroit 27, Michigan

Luis Barreiros (E,S,P)
Caixa Postal 375
Lima, N.O.B., SP, Brazil

Marilene Machado (S,P)—C
Caixa Postal 338
Erechim, RS, Brazil

Mariela Machado (E,S,P,F)—C
Avenida Pedro Pinto de Souza
Erechim, RS, Brazil

Carlos G. Barbieri (E,S)—H
Garay 531
Rosario, Pcia. de Santa Fe
Argentina

Hellmut Grimm (E,S,P,F)—C
Pacheco 2115
Olivos, Pcia. de Buenos Aires
Argentina

María Julieta Radicio Garbin
(E,S)—C
Moreno 1337
Rosario, Pcia. de Santa Fe
Argentina

Lia Fusi (E,S,P,F, German)—C
9 Diaz
Brescia, Italy

Leroy West (E,S,P)—C
P.O. Box 232
Arlington State College
Arlington, Texas

Emma Fuselli (E,S)—H
Alvarez Thomas 1556
Buenos Aires, Argentina

Janis Rae Duley (E,S)—H
3 Stanley Street
Dexter, Missouri

Miguel Aguilera (E,S,F)—H*
2a. Calle del Carmen, 52
Colonia Huerta del Carmen
San Angel, D. F., Mexico

The Organization of American States unites the twenty-one republics of the Western Hemisphere for the common purpose of maintaining peace, freedom, security, and welfare of all Americans. The member states are: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the United States, Uruguay, and Venezuela.

The OAS had its inception in 1890 during the First International Conference of American States, which met in Washington. Today, it operates through a large number of different agencies and institutions throughout the Hemisphere, all contributing to the common objective of preserving the peace and security of the member states and promoting, by cooperative action, their economic, social, and cultural development.

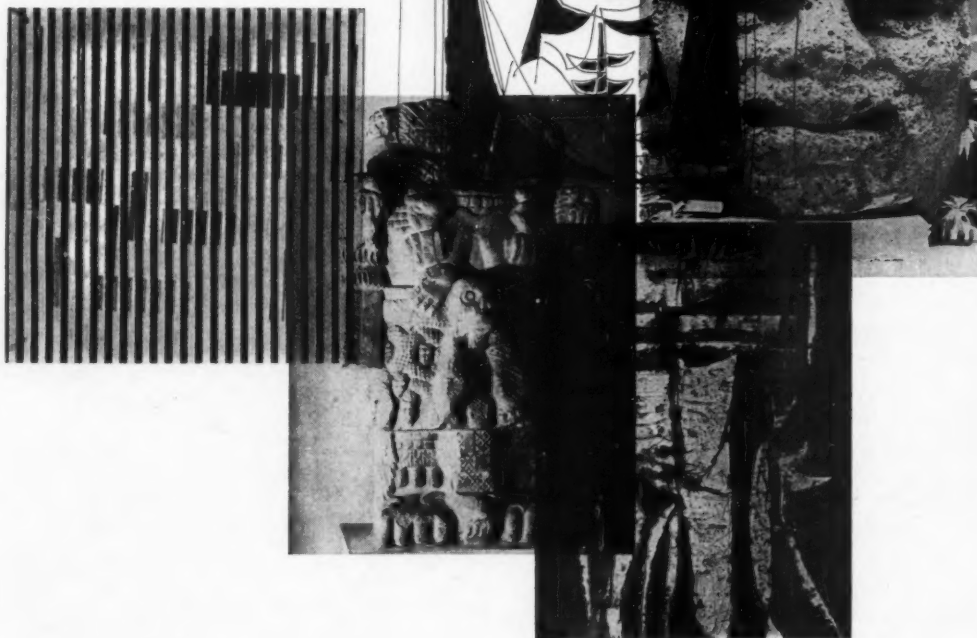
The Pan American Union, central permanent organ and General Secretariat of the OAS, has its headquarters in Washington, D.C. Called "The House of the Americas," its main building of white marble, with its tropical patio and Aztec Garden, is visited each year by thousands of Americans from all parts of the Western Hemisphere.

Pan American Day is celebrated annually throughout the Americas on April 14th.

Opposite: Ox vertebrae, combined with stones, pave path at Quinta de Bolívar. Liberator's modest estate near Bogotá is now Colombian national monument.



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